SIGISMAR.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

SIGISMAR.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF VILLEROY.

See thyſelf, devil!
Proper deformity ſeems not in the fiend
So horrid as in woman.

SHAKESPEARE.

I left no calling for this idle trade,
No duty broke——.

POPE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

SIGISMAR.

LETTER XLIII.

THE HON. CHARLES MACKENZIE TO THE EARL OF D——.

I HAVE been ſome hours collecting myſelf ſufficiently to deſcribe a ſcene of horror I have this day been witneſs to, which, I believe, in its unnatural incidents, ſurpaſſes every calamitous ſtory which hiſtory has yet recorded, or fiction invented.

At the concluſion of my laſt letter, I informed you I was at that moment going to accompany Mr. Leſley to our ill-fated William: we had reached the priſon ſo early that the gates were ſtill ſhut, and we were obliged to wait till the hour arrived of their being opened, during which time we were accoſted by a venerable figure, who aſked us if we could give him any information reſpecting an unfortunate young gentleman of the name of Leſley, who was confined in that priſon?

I inſtantly recollected the voice and figure of Dr. Howard, and made myſelf, and the father of the object of all our cares, known to him; on which he took the hand of Mr. Leſley, ſaying:

"We are, ſir, brothers in affliction; you cannot lament the fate of that

that excellent youth more ſincerely than I do;—but be comforted; his misfortunes a few hours will end, and our ſorrows will not be of long duration, for the time of our continuance here will be but ſhort; he is only gone a little before us; we ſhall meet, and never more be ſeparated."

Mr. Leſley impatiently interrupted him, with "I know not why you are intereſted in the fate of this my ill-fated ſon! nor does it matter—he is equally beyond your good or ill offices—ſo is his wretched father; therefore do not waſte yourſelf in vain and uſeleſs exhortations, for comfort can never reach this miſerable heart; nor do I look forward to thoſe joys you ſpeak of. That God, to whom you would have me look for future peace, is armed againſt me! He is not merciful!—he is

not juſt!—I have not merited his wrath, yet he has ſhowered curſes on my head with unrelenting cruelty; but his tyranny muſt now ceaſe, as I have nothing but my life to loſe, and in taking that he muſt, of neceſſity, do me a mercy."

Dr. Howard was ſhocked beyond expreſſion, and would have expoſtulated, but he forbade him, and called to me to try for admittance to the priſon.

At this moment the gate was opened; on entering, I enquired for my friend, and was informed he had not yet riſen: on which we went to his cell, and I approached his bed, where I beheld him dead! Dead by his own hand, having ſhot himſelf through the head! His death muſt have been inſtantaneous, as the fatal piſtol was ſtill graſped

graſped in his hand. I gazed at the melancholy ſpectacle, till the voice of his father, enquiring if it was poſſible he could ſleep, rouſed me. Starting back, I caught his arm, and prevented his nearer approach, conjuring him to leave the place, as the ſight would deſtroy him.

He broke from my hold, and, drawing aſide the curtains, diſcovered what I would have hid from his view; when, claſping his hands with ecſtacy, he exclaimed:

"My noble boy! now, now you are doubly my ſon! I joy more in thee at this moment than in thy happieſt hours! Oh, my honourable, my dignified hero!—this was the greateſt action of thy life!"

Dr. Howard ſtood over the corpſe in ſilent contemplation, but his face pourtrayed the agony of his mind: at length, ſinking on his knees, and raiſing his eyes and hands to heaven, he, in a ſolemn, fervent voice, beſought the Almighty to look with mercy and compaſſion on the ſoul of the erring mortal who had dared to raiſe his arm againſt his own life; and to pity the madneſs of his wretched miſtaken parent, and pour into his boſom the light of conviction, that he might ſee and repent of his ingratitude and preſumption, before the gates of mercy were eternally ſhut againſt him.

Mr. Leſley gazed firſt at him, then at me, whoſe tears were flowing plentifully, and in angry tone, addreſſed us, ſaying:

" Is

"Is this the parental love you boaſted? Is this your friendſhip? You repine at the death of a being who was to have died one hour hence, like a dog, on a gibbet. As to you, old man, I want not your prayers; if they will avail, keep them for yourſelf; your miſeries ſtand in need of them. That they have hitherto been uſeleſs, the ſorrow and diſgrace that now impels you to hide yourſelf in the grave, will witneſs for me: then where is this merciful, this bounteous Being to whom you look for ſuccour? Does he delay to anſwer your petitions? Why have his heavy curſes fallen on you, who have dedicated your life to his ſervice? Where is your reward? Where is your encouragement? I, who relied not upon his protection—I, who believed not in him, am only an equal ſufferer!"

I ſaw the Dean was inexpreſſibly ſhocked; to relieve him from the horror of hearing further, I preſented Mr. Læſley a letter, which, with others to Lord Vernon and myſelf, I had found upon a table in the room, and which had been written by my deceaſed friend, between the hours of my parting with him over night, and that of his committing the raſh action. He inſtantly read it aloud; its contents were expreſſive of gratitude to his father for his unremitted indulgence and proofs of affection through life, but more particularly for the encouragement he had given him to avoid the infamous death which awaited his beholding another ſun; that encouragement alone having inſpired the idea of cheating the malignity of his fate, in ſome degree, by flying from public view and univerſal contempt, and rendering his death leſs

irkſome

irkſome to his connections, and his name leſs a diſgrace to them and to his memory.

The poor frantic father traverſed the room, exulting in what he had done, and bleſſing the hour which had brought him to that place, and the words which had infused fortitude and honour into the boſom of his ſon.

In this ſtate I left him, having been informed by the turnkey, that a lady deſired to ſpeak to me. You may ſuppoſe I was ſurprized to find it was the Counteſs of N——! She obſerved it; and, addreſſing herſelf to me, ſaid:

"You ſeem aſtoniſhed, ſir; you will, perhaps, be more ſo, when you know the errand which has brought me

to this place! When you know the woman who you have officiouſly held up to the world as the moſt cruel and vindictive of human beings; as one guilty of perſecution, and even perjury, comes the meſſenger of mercy! Forgetful of the calumny you, ſir, have loaded her with; forgetful of the infamy with which her houſe is branded by a villain whoſe hand is ſtained with the blood of her deareſt relation, ſhe has deigned to be the inſtrument of his preſervation. Here, ſir, is his pardon!—to him who has robbed me of peace, I bring life! May his future conduct be ſuch as to ſave me from joining the cenſure of my own heart to that I ſhall be ſure to receive from the world for this proof of my too great ſenſibility and weakneſs!"

While

While ſhe was ſpeaking, I had caſt an eye on the paper, and was ſtruck with what appeared to me an uncommon circumſtance; (the hour of its date being mentioned.) Something, I know not what, for I entertained no ſuſpicion of this wretched woman's having defeated the royal intention, impelled me to aſk when ſhe had received that proof of his Majeſty's lenity? She replied "Yeſterday; but ſhe had delayed making it known, in the hope that the criminal, deſpairing of mercy here, would be more earneſt in his ſupplications for it hereafter."

You, my honoured lord, will readily conceive the horror and anguiſh which oppreſſed me; they choaked my utterance: at length, recollecting myſelf, I deſired ſhe would be a witneſs of the happy effects of her prudence; and

leading the way, ſhe followed into the dungeon, when, conducting her to the bed which contained the corpſe, I ſaid:

"There, madam, behold the proof of your boaſted ſenſibility! Behold the object of your accurſed malice!—dead by his own hand, but murdered by you! Had this paper not been detained by your inhumanity and injuſtice, my friend had lived! Your conduct has been complete; by perjury you procured his condemnation, and by concealing the mercy of his Sovereign, you have robbed him of life."

The wretched father of the raſh William, whoſe unſubſtantial joy had evaporated and left him awakened to the loſs he had ſuſtained, had, during this time, been ſtanding at the oppoſite

ſide

ſide of the bed, ſo loſt in contemplating the face he was ſoon to behold no more, that we had paſſed unnoticed: but my laſt ſentence catching his ear, he raiſed his eyes to us—ſtarted—and, in a voice ſcarcely articulate, exclaimed:

"Woman, who art thou?"

I replied, "She is the murderer of your ſon; the ſole deſtroyer of his happineſs and peace! Her artifice deprived him of Miſs Howard; her falſe evidence convicted him of malice, and her deſigned concealment has rendered this pardon ineffectual!"

Whilſt I was ſpeaking, he ſtared wildly at her, who had ſunk into a chair, hiding her face with her handkerchief. When I had ceaſed, he approached

the

the place where ſhe ſat, but ſhe flew to the further corner of the room, and falling on her knees, exclaimed, in a voice of terror:

"Oh, Sigiſmar, come not near me! Look not at me! The ſight of you has killed me!"

He followed, and ſeizing her arm, dragged her to the bed, where, pointing to the corpſe while he ſtill held her, he cried:

"Look there, thou infernal ſpirit! —thou bane of Sigiſmar's peace!— behold my ſon! thy ſon, too, murdered by the wretch that gave him life! Oh, bloody monſter! what could tempt thy heliſh malice againſt the moſt lovely, the moſt amiable of human beings? Didſt thou know he was thy child!—

and

and didſt thou glory in thy power to ſtab, a ſecond time, the heart of Sigiſmar?"

He talked to ſtone; ſhe was equally inſenſible to what he ſaid, and every thing around her. Never did I behold ſo ſtrange a ſpectacle: no monument of marble could appear more inanimate;—her eyes were fixed—her face was pale and death-like! She had ceaſed to breathe, yet her ſtrength had not forſaken her; for, on his quitting the arm he had held, which he did with ſome violence, ſhe changed not her poſition, but remained fixed as a ſtatue.

Alarmed at the ſtate ſhe was in, I called for aſſiſtance, and had her conveyed to the goaler's apartment. My anxiety would not ſuffer me to remain ſilent;

ſilent; I entreated Sigiſmar, (no longer Leſley) to unravel the myſtery which perplexed me: he replied:

"That woman is my wife; bound to me at the altar! and that youth, the proof of our fatal connexion. A diſcovery of our intercourſe, but not our marriage, on the part of her brother, occaſioned his getting me an employment in a foreign country. I parted from her with cheerfulneſs, as I conceived her mine beyond the reach of any accident but death: ſhe vowed eternal truth, and thus ſhe kept her vow.

"The firſt accounts I had from her informed me, that, unable to withſtand the commands of her brother, ſhe had given that hand I had before received to the Earl of N——; ſhe conjured

conjured me not to diſcover I was her huſband, as it would brand her name with infamy, and deprive her of the means of providing for our infant boy, who I had left to her care: ſhe added, as another apology for her conduct, that the poverty in which we were involved, made it impoſſible we ſhould ever have lived together with comfort, and again urged me not to claim her as my wife. Had ſhe known the pride of my heart, theſe entreaties had been unneceſſary; for though it had doated on her to diſtraction, and though by loſing her I had loſt all hopes of happineſs, I felt I could not have again received her to my arms, had ſhe brought kingdoms along with her.

"I was not long in determining what courſe to purſue, but reſigning my employment, I returned privately to England,

England, where, changing my name, and aſſuming a diſguiſe, I had opportunities of obſerving in what manner ſhe conducted herſelf in her new ſituation, and I was early convinced her preſent owner was not more honourably treated than I had been: ſhe had almoſt bade adieu to decency, and entirely ſet the world at defiance. Such a want of principle marked her whole behaviour, that had not fate condemned me to be wretched, I muſt have rejoiced at the event which had rid me of a worthleſs creature: but, urged on by my evil deſtiny, I paſſed my unhappy hours in mourning my loſs, and curſing the perfidy which had undone me.

" My ſoul thirſted for revenge, and I eagerly embraced the only means that offered any proſpect of ſucceſs; this was, depriving her of our child, which

I found

I found ſhe was fond of to a degree of idolatry.

" To this purpoſe, I watched an opportunity, and conveyed it, unſeen, from the cottage where it was nurſed, and hid myſelf, with my treaſure, in a remote part of Wales, till it became neceſſary to place him where he might receive that inſtruction I was not qualified to give him; and had I been poſſeſſed of abilities for the office, my perturbed heart would not have ſuffered me to perform it.

" The death of my father had given me an independance ſufficient to anſwer my purpoſe. On my return to London, I found the Earl of N—— had ſeparated from his profligate partner, and that ſhe had gone abroad.

" I now

"I now wrote to her, to inform her I had been the perſon who had deprived her of her ſon, of whom ſhe was unworthy; that in caſe of my death, I ſhould leave him the information that ſhe was his mother, and, ſhould he die while we lived, ſhe ſhould have intelligence of it.

"I now placed my charge under the care of a clergyman, and retired to the ſolitude where you found me, where I have ſince lived a ſtranger to every thing which related to this wretched woman, and all the world beſide.

"I have now, ſir, developed the myſtery which perplexed you, and ſhall again retire to my ſolitude, where I will exhauſt the little ſtrength I have left, in venting curſes on the murderer of my boy."

At

At theſe words, Dr. Howard approached him, aſking, "And who do you term the murderer?" He replied, "The infernal fiend that bore him."

Dr. Howard looked ſternly in his face, ſaying, "What preſumption is this!" and holding up my poor friend's letter, continued:

"Look here, ſir!—what ſays this paper? Have you forgot its contents? Does not the writer acknowledge the horrid idea of ſuicide would not have entered his thoughts had not his father urged him to it? Does he not ſay, he would have waited with reſignation the completion of his ſentence, had not his father forbade him?

"Oh, thou cruel, thou guilty parent! who haſt inſtilled impatience and diſtruſt

truſt in the boſom of thy hapleſs ſon! —Diſtruſt of that God who would have ſaved him! You have thwarted the deſigns of Providence—you have reverſed the bleſſings it had in ſtore for him!

"Behold this pardon—this act of mercy with which the King of Kings had inſpired your earthly Maſter—it would have ſaved your ſon; it would have reſtored him to his long loſt mother. See you not why ſhe was made the inſtrument of his preſervation? Were you not brought hither to make them known to each other? and would not that knowledge have been proſperous to your ſon? and would not the horrid deed from which ſhe had eſcaped, have made a laſting impreſſion on the wretched woman who has been the cauſe of all your miſery? Would ſhe not have repented, and made her peace with

with heaven? Would ſhe not have atoned to the father for the ruin ſhe had brought on him, by her maternal protection of his ſon? Yes, yes, all would have been well; you, unhappy man! would have ſeen the errors of your paſt life; you would have emerged from the fatal darkneſs in which you have lived; you would have ſeen the hand of Omnipotence; you would have felt His mercy, and acknowledged His juſtice!

" But you have preſumed to judge of a Being whoſe laws you have not made yourſelf acquainted with; you have murmured at his decrees, while you doubted of his power: you accuſed him of cruelty from whom you never aſked mercy; you talked of his injuſtice, though you renounced his protection. At the moment he was order-

ordering your future happineſs, you denied his authority, and flew from his guidance: offended at your preſumption, he has forſaken you, and ſuffered you to fall a victim to your repining and diſbelief: you are alone the murderer of your ſon: your pernicious counſel has driven him from a world he would have adorned, and at a moment when the ſunſhine of proſperity was breaking round his head."

The miſerable father had, during this time, only interrupted him with bitter groans: he now breathed out in a voice of ſupplication:

"No more! no more!—I ſee my errors, and feel my guilt; but what can theſe avail me? Contrition is now uſeleſs; I dare not ſupplicate the God I have denied! Too late I know him; his miniſter

miniſter of vengeance is gone forth: while I acknowledge his juſtice, I tremble at his power. I have ſinned beyond forgiveneſs; I have plunged myſelf, and my too obedient ſon, into miſery eternal!"

Joy beamed on the countenance of Dr. Howard, and looking up and claſping his hands, he exclaimed:

"Oh, my God! I thank thee that thou haſt deigned to ſend a ray of light into the darkened boſom of this man of ſorrow! Oh, continue thy viſitation! be reconciled to him; make him ſenſible of thy mercy; heal the wounds of his mind, and ſave him from deſpair."

Then taking his hand, he led him to a chair, and ſeating himſelf by him, pro-

ceeded (in a voice and words that would have ſoothed deſpair itſelf) to comfort him with promiſes from Holy Writ, to which he liſtened with eager attention; till, burſting into tears, he wept aloud, and wringing the hand of his venerable teacher, exclaimed:

"Oh, ſir, mine is a hard boſom, but you have melted it!—Theſe are the firſt tears that ever wet theſe cheeks! they have relieved me, and I will welcome them. But wilt thou, thou holy man, continue to inſtruct my wayward heart?—Ah! teach me to ſtill its murmurings; to abate its throbbings! I will be guided by you—you ſhall mark the path I am to tread—you ſhall explain to me my duty. I will mourn my loſt William, but it ſhall be as a man who looks forward to meeting him in another life; as a man who has merited the heavy

heavy correction he has received; as one who wiſhes to become a Chriſtian."

The report of my poor friend's death had ſpread through the priſon: curioſity had brought a number of the priſoners to the door of his apartment; their impatience was too great to be any longer reſtrained, and I took the opportunity of this interruption, to propoſe the Dean and Sigiſmar's departure from that ſcene of horror and confuſion, which they accordingly did, and I only remained to give directions how the corpſe ſhould be diſpoſed of.

On my arrival at my lodgings, I found Dr. Howard had prevailed on Sigiſmar to take ſome reſt, and that he himſelf had gone to his ill-fated daughter, who he had not before ſeen.

I embraced the leiſure this afforded me, to give you the recital of theſe calamitous events; which, having done, I ſhall conclude my letter, the exceſſive length of which, with the other fatigues I have undergone, hath almoſt exhauſted my ſtrength. My honoured father will therefore excuſe any incoherencies or omiſſions he may remark, and believe me to be, with the moſt affectionate duty, his Son,

CHARLES MACKENZIE.

LETTER XLIV.

LORD VERNON TO SIR HENRY DORSET.

WELL, Harry! here I am, ſafe lodged in Paris, and here I have been for theſe ten days, but the devil take me if I would ſtay ten days longer for the whole revenue of the republic! My reaſons you ſhall know by and by: but I will firſt give you a ſketch of an interview I had with my beloved uncle, the prelate, previous to my leaving Groſvenor Square.

Juſt after I had diſpatched my laſt letter to you, and while my equipage waited at my door to convey me to

Dover, who ſhould enter my room but this perſonage, not at any time a deſirable viſitor, but at the preſent an intolerable Bore. His rather ſudden, and entirely unexpected entrance, made me ſtare, which he obſerving, aſked, "What occaſions your confuſion, ſir? is it ſhame to ſee me?"

I replied, I certainly felt myſelf aſhamed to ſee my attendants ſo exceſſively remiſs as to oblige his lordſhip to announce himſelf. "It was my pleaſure to do ſo, ſir," was his anſwer. But I ſhall now proceed to give you our converſation as it paſſed, leaving you to diſcover the ſpeaker by the ſpeech.

"I feel myſelf honoured by the liberty your lordſhip has taken, as I am convinced nothing but your acknowledging

ledging me for your relation, could have occaſioned your breaking through the rules decorum have preſcribed."

"None of your agreeable ſneers, ſir!"

"I crave your pardon, my lord; but upon my honour I did not mean an *agreeable* ſneer."

"Your honour!—you may ſwear by that, I am afraid while you live, and never be forſworn."

"I am moſt happy in your lordſhip's good opinion."

"Yes, ſir, you have juſt as much of my good opinion as you have honour; the tithe of a hair would make both kick the balance."

"Ah, my good lord, you cannot forget former times! the tithes ſtill run in your head I ſee! well, it is all fair —'tis very natural."

"Then, ſir, if it is fair or natural, you cannot approve it; for what is fair and natural muſt be honeſt; and every action of your life has been at variance with honeſty as well as honour. You tell me, ſir, I acknowledge you as my relation—I do, but it is becauſe I could not deny it without being guilty of a falſehood, elſe you ſhould be as much an alien to my blood as you are to my heart: this be aſſured of, I never recollect how near we are allied without a bluſh, nor can I refrain from wiſhing, at this moment, I were like your noble father, hid in the grave, and inſenſible to the diſgrace you have brought upon all your connections."

"I am

"I am ſorry to find your lordſhip is not in poſſeſſion of all your wiſhes; and undutiful as you think me, I proteſt had I the power, you ſhould long ſince have been beyond envying any man."

"I congratulate you, ſir; once you have ſpoke truth; but as my life or death does not depend on your firſt concurrence with my wiſhes, I will proceed to the buſineſs which induced me to enter this houſe. I underſtand you are going to quit England."

"Yes, my lord, I have thoughts of going abroad."

"Thoughts! I underſtood this was the hour fixed for your departure! What is it you mean by thoughts?"

"Your information, my dear uncle, was perfectly right; and my ſpeaking doubtingly was owing to my politeneſs, conceiving it would be ill-bred to tell you your preſent viſit was an intruſion; but ſince you have yourſelf made the diſcovery, I may, without being guilty of any rudeneſs, venture to inform you, that your being in my houſe alone prevents my being on my road to Dover, from whence I mean to go to Paris, from thence to Naples and Rome, and from thence I am not ſure but I may take a peep at the pyramids of Egypt, where, if I can do any thing to ſerve your lordſhip it will give me great ſatisfaction to hear from you."

"There is but one thing, ſir, you can do to ſerve me and yourſelf at the ſame time."

"Uſe

"Uſe no ceremony, my dear Lord Biſhop; pray command me."

"Why then, my dear nephew, break your neck from one of thoſe pyramids; you will then do at your death what you never did in your life—benefit mankind, and oblige your uncle! But I am not here to waſte myſelf in words; I came to be informed what proviſion you have made for, and what you have done with, the ill-ſtarred woman to whom you gave the title of wife. She is the daughter of a man of worth and honour; a man who is reſpectable, not only from his integrity and abilities, but from his ſituation in life. Yes; ſuch is the man you have made wretched; you have robbed him of his darling child, and by ſo doing you have broken his heart: what recompence can you make him, or how can

you atone to the unhappy girl whoſe peace and fame you have ruined by ſeducing her from her protecting parent? Speak, ſir!—what retribution have you made? This is my errand to you, therefore let me know in what ſituation you have placed her."

"Oh, my dear lord, if that is all, I can eaſily ſatisfy you. If this tender parent was unhappy at the loſs of his child, he is now happy in regaining her! If the poor girl was miſerable at being taken from her tender parent, ſhe is now conſoled by returning to his protection. In ſhort, I have ſettled the whole affair in the pleaſanteſt manner you can conceive, for I have given her back to him; at leaſt, I have left her ladyſhip to follow her own inclinations, or thoſe of her tender parent, which ever ſhall ſuit her beſt."

"And

"And what have you allotted for her maintenance?"

"Faith, my lord, nothing! with nothing I received her, and with nothing I have returned her."

"Suppoſe her father will not give her ſhelter!"

"Why then ſomebody elſe will; ſhe is a fine woman, and whilſt ſhe remains ſuch, ſhe will find enough ready to take care of her, and when ſhe is not, ſhe muſt take care of herſelf."

"What! is it your wife you are ſpeaking of! the woman who bears your name! it cannot be! I muſt have miſconceived you!"

"Faith,

"Faith, no, my lord; your comprehenſion is perfectly clear in this particular; it is Lady Vernon I mean."

"Is it poſſible? Oh, thou monſter! thou inſenſible fool! thou unfeeling villain! What! conſign your wife to infamy! Compel her to proſtitution! Oh, thou diſgrace to mankind—thou haſt frighted me! But what could I expect from a wretch whoſe life has been a libel on his family! Yet, the moſt deſpicable, though they glory in their own ſhame, ſhrink with horror from that which the infidelity of a wife brings upon them!—but thou art complete! From this moment I renounce thee! Yet, I will offer one word of advice before we part—it is this: go to ſome part of the world where your name was never heard of; take with you no being to whom you were ever known.

Thus

Thus you may eſcape being the deteſtation of thoſe with whom you aſſociate, till ſome new crime, ſome breach of the laws by which you ought to be governed, or ſome brutal act of injuſtice and inhumanity to a fellow creature, make you known for what you are—an unprincipled ideot: one who has bartered every honour, every good he received from his dignified family, except his eſtate, which the meanneſs of his ſoul prevented him ſquandering."

With this polite ſpeech he ſtalked out of the room, and left me looking prodigiouſly ſilly: I don't know what the devil ailed me, but I felt very queer. After a hem or two, and pulling up my frill, I rang my bell with intention to give orders in my uſual lofty ſtile; but, on the appearance of my valet, I felt all my courage vaniſh, and I found

I found myſelf ſqueaking out a requeſt that my departure might be immediate; the fellow ſtared, and withdrew, but upon my ſoul I thought he looked contemptuouſly, and I did not doubt he had heard the encomiums paſſed on me by the charitable churchman.

This idea led me to conſider the advice I had received from this teacher of patience, one part of which I determined to follow—that of taking no one with me who could be my biographer; and at Dover I diſmiſſed my whole retinue, reſerving only a lad who had been but a ſhort time with me, and who I had ſtill a better reaſon for chooſing. This was, his not only being an entire ſtranger to the French language, but the Engliſh alſo, having juſt eſcaped from the Welch mountains.

This

This was the firſt time I had paid any attention to my reverend uncle's advice, and devil take me but it ſhall be the laſt, for the difficulties it has involved me in are beyond deſcribing.

In the firſt place, I might as well have an Ourang-Outang about my perſon, I ſhould comprehend him juſt as well, and he me; but this is not the worſt, for ſome part of mine, and my divine ſpouſe's adventures had reached France before; and as the reporter had magnified pretty handſomely circumſtances which, in my opinion, are quite bad enough, without the ſmalleſt addition, I am gazed at with as much wonder as though I were one of the Monſtrous-Craws, which our Engliſh fools ran after ſome time ſince. But not ſatisfied with crowding round me, ſtaring in my face, ſwallowing every word

word I utter, they queſtion my mountaineer, who, though he knows not one ſyllable they ſay, expects they ſhould, and is enraged they do not, underſtand him. When he tells them he does not, his diſpleaſure adds not to the placidity of his countenance, naturally ferocious; the harmony of his voice marvellouſly diſcordant; or the grace of his geſticulation at all times violent; ſo that he makes a very tremendous appearance when his Welch blood is in fermentation. This they produce as an argument of my guilt, and thus they ſtate it.

"Would" ſay they, "one of the nobleſſe of England, or any country, ſet out upon his travels in a ſtile hardly ſuperior to the meaneſt bourgeois in Paris? Rich and noble, would he have no attendants but a madman, or one who

who affects to be one? No, no; the myſtery is eaſily ſeen through."

Concealment was my aim; concealment argues ſhame, and ſhame teſtifies guilt. In ſhort, I am looked on as a murderous aſſaſſin by the men, and a jealous poltroon by the women; ſo that I am alone in the midſt of a crowd; but to be ſure it is a curſed ſet which compoſe it; all plebeians—not a man of faſhion to be ſeen; and as to the women, they are perfect monſters! nothing genteel or fit for a man of rank to look at: nor would they look at him if they were, unleſs it was to make mouths, or throw dirt at him. They deſpiſe lords, and I for one lord deteſt them, and could as ſoon ſay ſoft things to my mountaineer as to theſe female democratic equality warriors.

Now

Now, Harry, I cannot poſſibly live without a goddeſs to ſigh to, therefore nothing remains for me but to quit Paris, which I ſhall do immediately; and, upon my ſoul, I am nearly tempted to follow another part of my uncle's advice, by going to ſome part of the world where my name was never heard of. I cannot help wiſhing, with Falſtaff, "that I knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought; for, after all, they are uſeful things."

Prithee, Harry, do not you and I know many raſcals, who, having by hypocriſy obtained one of thoſe ſaid good names, commit crimes of which ſuch honeſt fellows as we were afterwards ſuſpected, though the want of that very good name had ſhut us out from the poſſibility of deſerving the accuſation!

Well,

Well, among all my faults, I never attempted to paſs myſelf on the world for what I really was not: I have ſcorned diſguiſe; it has ſeen me in my true colours; known me for what I am; and, from what I can judge of its opinion, it coincides pretty nearly with that of my right reverend uncle. Well, be it ſo; yet, Dorſet, if I thought a good character as eaſy to be gained as it is to be loſt, I verily believe, in the humour I am in, I ſhould ſet about obtaining one.—That "more joy over one ſinner which repenteth," dwells on my mind, but then that only means in the other world, it has no reference to this. No, there is no joy here: if a poor devil does wiſh to tread back his erroneous ſteps, there are ſo many ſtumbling blocks placed in his way, that he muſt have more than mortal perſeverance if he ſucceeds, as nine tenths of

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the worthy inhabitants of this globe, would lend their whole ſtrength to drive him forward, when they would refuſe a finger to aſſiſt his return; and the other tenth, would, by their incredulity, equally impede his progreſs; they require ſo much time to be convinced of the penitent's ſincerity, and are ſo frigidly unſocial and diſheartening during the trial, that it is ten to one but the intended proſelyte's reſolution fails; and, deterred by the Herculean labour, returns to his former life with additional contempt for that virtue, which renders its votaries proud, arrogant, ſuſpicious, and difficult of acceſs.

I am no great caſuiſt; yet, I think if more countenance were to be given to every appearance of reformation, ſuch appearances would be more frequent. If, inſtead of a chilling, re-

treating

treating kind of civility, thoſe who practice and teach virtue, would come forward and encourage every offender againſt its laws who betrays a dawn of contrition, they would fulfil their miſſion better than they now do; for, in my mind, their preſent plan is calculated to continue every tranſgreſſor in his errors. Man was not born to live alone, therefore if he relinquiſhes his bad company, and good will not receive him, what is he to do? Why, of courſe, return to what he quitted, and thus a good citizen and Chriſtian is for ever loſt.

Now, Harry, what think you of this; have I not written well? Upon my faith, if his reverence, my obliging uncle had been the author, it had been termed excellent morality; but coming from the diſſolute Lord Vernon, it would

would be thrown by as ſtuff; and I ſhould be either ſuppoſed out of my ſenſes, or making mockery when I wrote it. This is one of the diſadvantages attending a bad name, but it is a pigmy to ſome I experience. Upon my ſoul, Harry, it is very unaccountable, but ſince I left the ſhores of Albion, I have had the moſt longing deſire to return to them! My abſences have heretofore been long and frequent, and I hardly remembered there was ſuch a place as Britain, when an inhabitant of this now favourite iſle; I laughed at its cuſtoms, and deſpiſed my untravelled countrymen, the meaneſt of which I at this moment envy.

What is it, then, that retards my return? Is it ſhame, or is it fear? Leſley is indeed there, but have I not preſerved his life? and is it poſſible he ſhould

ſhould purſue mine? I think not; it muſt be ſhame, and ſhame it certainly is: but from whence this new viſitant is arrived, or why, after being ſo long a ſtranger to my boſom, it ſhould aſſume ſuch deſpotic ſway—no new offence has given being to it: for though, in reſpect to Lady Vernon, I may not have conducted myſelf like what nature never intended me for—a kind or prudent huſband; yet I have done nothing which could procure me this unpleaſant companion; and as to Leſley, by all that's wonderful, I think I have been ridiculouſly generous to him: yet, this affair with them has certainly been the cauſe of my preſent confuſion. He had the world's good opinion, I its bad one; of courſe it would vindicate him, and condemn me. To give a colour of juſtice to the deciſion, every crime, every folly of which I had been guilty or ac-

cuſed, were produced; and though I had been able to brazen them out ſingly, yet, when collected into a huge maſs, there was no facing it. Such a catalogue of vices caught the attention of all ranks, and I was held up as an object of deteſtation.

Pride and policy equally dictated to their followers to ſhun me, for the honeſt man would not be ſeen with me, and the knave dared not, leſt it ſhould prevent his ſucceſs in future, as his approval of my principles would ſtamp the value of his own.

Thus I have accounted to you and to myſelf, in the beſt manner I am able, for my preſent ill treatment; how long it is to continue I cannot ſay, but I ſhould gueſs a pretty time; for "Men's evil manners live in braſs! their virtues we write

write in water." Well, I have this to comfort me, whatever pains they may take to remember my vices, I defy them to forget my virtues.

I do not know how the devil it is, but I never entered on the plan of reformation, but ſome curſed accident prevented me: I remember the ſudden and violent death of one of our brethren, ſome time paſt, determined me to lead a new life, and I actually went to my mitred uncle to acquaint him with my holy intentions, and to requeſt his aſſiſtance and inſtructions.

I found him and my aunt, a penitential old ſoul, together; I hailed the opportunity of gaining what I was ſenſible I had never poſſeſſed; (a place in her good opinion) and withour loſs of time I communicated my buſineſs.

The Biſhop ſeemed ſomewhat credulous, but his enthuſiaſtic lady ſuddenly lifting up her hands and eyes to heaven, returned thanks for the light which had been given me: at the ſame moment, her lap dog, which was lying oppoſite to her, and had been taught by his miſtreſs what ſhe termed begging, obſerving her motion, conceived it to be a ſignal for him to diſplay his abilities; and, eager to obey her commands, cocked himſelf on his hind legs, holding up his paws in the attitude of entreaty, at the ſame time howling in a ſtrain not unlike that of his ſage inſtructreſs.

Uſed at no time of my life to reſtrain my emotions, I found it now impoſſible to check my riſible faculties; though the noiſe of Adonis had paſſed unnoticed, my laughing caught her ear, when,

when, turning her head rather too quickly, her ſpectacles, which were upon her noſe, flew to the ground. Hoping to atone for the fault I had committed, I haſtily picked them up, and returned them; but perceiving they had been broken by the fall, and always preferring my jeſt to my friend, I unluckily remarked, that after all, I was certainly a greater favourite of heaven than ſhe was, for my light had been given me, but that ſhe would be obliged to buy her's, or continue in perpetual darkneſs.

I finiſhed this fooliſh ſpeech by laughing at my own wit. I was rouſed from my own ſelf-approbation by receiving the frame of the unfortunate glaſſes in my face; this favour came from the lady, and was followed by the Biſhop's opening the door, and ordering me in-

ſtantly to quit his houſe, which command I thought proper to obey, as I perceived the old lady's wrath rather increaſed than diminiſhed: and a long time it was before I could appeaſe this noble pair; but at length my uncle's Chriſtian forgiveneſs prevailed over his diſpleaſure, and through his mediation I was permitted to pay my reſpects to his mild companion.

I had felt the loſs of his reverence's countenance in the world, I was therefore determined not to forfeit it again; the beſt means to prevent which I knew was by conciliating the affections of the lady of the manſion.

Full of this deſign, I made my viſit; the company was large, which prevented my being ſo particular in my attentions as I intended, but I loſt no opportunity

that

that offered, watching every moment I ſaw her ſtanding, to expreſs my fears of her over fatiguing herſelf, approaching near whenever ſhe was ſpeaking, and liſtening with the moſt profound reſpect.

She ſeemed won by my conduct, and I placed myſelf near her to ſecure my conqueſt, when, unhappily perceiving her in motion, ſhe wiſhed to paſs to another part of the room; and, impelled by my anxiety to make myſelf uſeful, I precipitately drew away the chair on which it ſeems ſhe had been preparing to ſit down, and, to my infinite confuſion, ſhe fell to the ground, with a noiſe that would have done honour to the burſting of a cannon.

Every one except myſelf flew to her aſſiſtance; I was only inactive through

embarraſſment; ſeveral attempts were made to reinſtate her on her feet, but her bulk was not in favour of the friendly deſign. At length, a little Frenchman capered up, and, ſeizing both her wriſts, gave a ſudden jerk which raiſed her conſiderably from the ground, but her weight being much out of proportion to his ſtrength, ſhe ſpeedily reſumed her poſt, at the ſame time throwing her agile friend over her head.

The effect this had on the company, rendered them incapable of further aſſiſtance: I could not refrain from partaking of the mirth it had occaſioned, and was among the loudeſt laughers. This was heavily reſented by my uncle, who firmly believed I had taken this opportunity of revenging myſelf for the paſt neglect, by expoſing his lady to ridicule. In this opinion he was afterwards

wards confirmed by the public appearance of a caricature print, under the ſtile and title of The Whale aground, or the Marquis Defeated; in which the likeneſs of the parties were admirably preſerved.

The credit of this performance was given to me; the thing was clever—ſo for my ſoul I could not find prudence to deny it, and the right owner never having diſputed my claim, I ſtand recorded in the memories of the diſſipated and unthinking, as the beſt of ſatyriſts, and a deviliſh clever fellow; and with the ſober part of mankind, I am held as an unnatural relation, and a cowardly puppy, who inſulted a woman becauſe her protector was a churchman, and could not call me to account for it.

It is hardly neceſſary to ſay, no repentance of mine could prevail on the gentle nature of my offended aunt, nor have I ever had converſe with, or countenance from her reverend lord ſince the affair, till the viſit I have juſt given you a deſcription of.

But upon my ſoul, Harry, I muſt conclude this octavo volume, for I am vilely tired; ſo farewell!—write to me; tell me what you are about!—what my better half is about—and what that fellow Leſley is about!—alſo what people ſay of thoſe two laſt perſonages—of Lady C——, the Counteſs of N——, and, in ſhort, what is ſaid of any of us, concerned in the late derangement, except myſelf.

But prithee mind! not a word of myſelf!—I am not fond of egotiſm, eſpecially when given in a bad ſtile;—ſo mum's the word!—Adieu, and hey for Naples.

VERNON.

LETTER XLV.

THE COUNTESS OF N—— TO LADY BELL EASTWOOD.

THE rewards of virtue I have never merited, therefore I am not empowered to ſpeak of their ſweetneſs: to the puniſhment of vice I have unhappily entitled myſelf, and I am eminently qualified to deſcribe its bitterneſs. Were the ſorrows which wring my heart, the infamy which brands my character, the abhorrence and contempt attendant on my name, the only evils I had to dread, I would patiently await the hour which was to hide me in my grave!

grave!—But, alas! that ſomething after death, drives patience from my boſom, and fills it with deſpair.

Oh, death, why art thou ſo terrible to me! Why cannot I fly to thee, and ſhun the world, which hath nothing but wretchedneſs in ſtore for me! Ah, thou refuge of the juſt! wouldſt thou promiſe to make me nothing, how would I court thee! Wouldſt thou promiſe to let me be a ſod, or a vile clod of earth for beaſts to tread upon, how would I rejoice! To fly to thy embraces, I would not wait thy bidding; but, with this hand, long practiſed in forging deeds of villainy, ſtab a heart which has from infancy been the ſeat of every vice, and every vicious inclination! But no! thou wilt not let me reſt in darkneſs and inſenſibility—I muſt awake. And oh, I muſt account for

for all that waſte of time and talents which had been given me!

My omiſſions were enough: what then muſt I expect when my crimes appear againſt me? Eternal damnation! —eternal miſery! Where ſhall I hide me from the thought? I cannot; I muſt not die; yet, a few ſhort years are all I have to hope: weeks, days, or hours, may be the ſummit.

Great power, 'grant me life! load me with ſhame, poverty, penitence, and diſeaſe!—let my ſufferings here purchaſe my pardon hereafter! But how dare I preſume to aſk for mercy? I feel my offences are beyond its reach: to you, who are no ſtranger to many of my unprincipled actions, I will relate others of a deeper dye, which have ended in my deſtruction.

Know,

Know, then, that man, that Sigiſmar who you thought I abandoned while a lover, was my huſband a year prior to my knowing the Count D— N——; and alſo know, that by this huſband who I loved, (though pride and avarice tempted me to forſake him) I had a ſon; a lovely, beauteous infant, which, on its father's leaving England, was left to my care.

'Tis natural to ſuppoſe, the abhorrence and contempt of this injured man followed the knowledge of my perfidy: he loſt no time in removing from my reach a charge I had proved myſelf ſo unworthy of. This information he himſelf conveyed to me in a letter, which alſo contained a promiſe, that in caſe of his own death, his child ſhould be inſtructed I was his mother; and if

we

we ſurvived it, I ſhould be made acquainted with its deceaſe.

The loſs of my darling boy had planted a thorn in my boſom which time could not eradicate; nor did Sigiſmar's intelligence contribute to leſſen my anxiety; the ſmall degree of hope it held out only ſerved to make my fears more terrible, and I have lived a prey to the moſt unremitted inquietude. Sometimes, indeed, I indulged the bliſsful idea of finding this injured huſband, and being reſtored to his affection, through the mediation of our child: but, alas! theſe moments of deluſion were few and fleeting. The knowledge of his temper, and the greatneſs of my offence, too ſoon drove them from me, and left me the victim of deſpair.

At times parental affection got the better of the love I ſtill bore the man I had ruined, and I wiſhed his death as the only means of diſcovering my ſon: but even here I could find no relief from miſery; for the too great probability that he had been taught by his injured father to deteſt and curſe me, filled my affrighted imagination with horror. I felt his hate would exceed every other torture, and I felt it would be more than my nature could ſupport.

Thus driven from every hope of deriving comfort by his life, I was tempted to wiſh him dead, as the only means of relieving my ſuſpenſe and diſtraction. Thus have I lived the envy of the world, and the object of pity and contempt to myſelf; I have carried ſmiles on my face, when my boſom heaved with ſighs; I have, for many

many years, deceived my moſt intimate acquaintance, but I could never for one moment deceive my own heart. At the feſtive board it told me I was wretched; at the midnight ball it repeated the ſame tale: in company I was alone—and when alone, I was encompaſſed with terrors.

The only hope I could ever retain for a moment was that of finding my child. Mean enough to be biaſſed by my wealth, I thought I might purchaſe a feigned affection; this, in any other ſituation, would have been an unſubſtantial pleaſure; but choſen from a multitude of greater evils, it wore the aſpect of happineſs, and I graſped it with an eagerneſs which has defeated all my deſigns, and robbed me of every probability of future peace.

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My anxiety to preſerve the only means that were left to reconcile me to my ſon, has hurried me to acts of cruelty and injuſtice, which has ended in my own deſtruction. The ſucceſs of the ſchemes which I in the exultation of my heart related to you, has involved me in guilt, infamy, and remorſe. When I ſhall have made you acquainted with the vaſt extent of my offences, you, even you, will ſhudder to think you once called me friend, and lived in habits of intimacy with me. Yet, if your heart is ſuſceptible of compaſſion, you cannot but pity the wretch whoſe ſorrows are great in proportion to her crimes; greater never can be!

But why do I delay to finiſh a tale which will at once raiſe your wonder, and convince you that there is a hand we cannot ſee, which holds the rod of cor-

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rection ready to inflict chaſtiſement at the moment we are triumphing in our ſuppoſed ſecurity.

May my ſtory prove a warning to you and many others, who, like me, have lived in thoughtleſs diſſipation, to ſtop in time; that is, this moment: for, alas! you know not what the next may produce. My guilt has been imperceptibly progreſſive; with every offence my heart grew harder; and, as my conſcience became daily leſs vulnerable, I had almoſt ceaſed to think any of my actions criminal.

In this ſtate, had not vengeance overtaken me in this world, I had probably entered on my account in the next!—Dreadful account! Oh! might all the anguiſh of my humbled heart but waſh it from thy records! But it will not; no,

no, no, it cannot be!—my crimes have not only been deſtructive to myſelf, but calamitous to others. How many inoffenſive beings has my artifice involved in ruin! Will they not appear againſt me? Yes, and they will call for juſtice, and juſtice will be given them!

I think, at this moment, I ſee my accuſers!—Sigiſmar is at their head!—An hoſt of Howards too are there! and Leſley—ſee! he holds up his hands and pleads againſt me!—nay, my boy! my ſon! with-hold thy imprecations; they are heavier than all the reſt; they ſink my ſoul. Alas, I rave!—how is it with me when my imagination paints ſuch ſcenes of horror! But I will ſtrive to repreſs its workings, that I may acquaint you with what juſtice it torments me.

Know,

Know, then, that Leſley, the ill-fated youth over whom I heretofore triumphed, was my child! That child whoſe loſs has embittered ſo many of my paſt years, and will make thoſe to come, terrible.

This diſcovery was made in the dungeon of a priſon, where my artifice had placed him. The particulars are too many to relate; ſuffice it to ſay, after being the cauſe of his falling into the hands of juſtice, I, by perjury, procured ſentence of death to be paſſed on him; but though my heart was ſhut to juſtice and humanity, that of our pitying Sovereign was open to compaſſion; and, prompted by the youth and uncommon merit of the intended ſufferer, he put into my accurſed hands a pardon, and bid me haſten to be the harbinger of life. Think not this was done from

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any opinion I would delight in ſuch an office: no, no, my conduct had been a contradiction to every idea of the kind; I had made Lord Vernon the inſtrument that procured me this honour.

Inſtead of flying to unlock the priſon door, and adminiſter comfort to the hopeleſs heart I had filled with deſpair, I delayed to communicate the merciful intentions of my gracious Maſter, till the hour in which the victim of my malice was to ſuffer. But, before I proceed, let me do myſelf the little juſtice that is in my power, by declaring, that this once in my iniquitous life the miſchief I did was greater than I intended, as I wiſhed to have it appear I had been refuſed my petition to the throne till the laſt hour. I likewiſe thought, the nearer the moment of fate approached, the greater would be the gratitude

gratitude of the reprieved—but I was cruelly miſtaken; for, on my reaching the manſion of miſery, I found the ill-ſtarred youth had defeated all my ſchemes, by putting an end to his own life ſome hours before I arrived!

If I felt compunction at the ſight of the ſelf-murdered wretch, what muſt my ſenſations have been when I diſcovered my injured huſband groaning with anguiſh over the lifeleſs body, and crying, "Oh, my ſon, my ſon!" But what muſt they have been when this ruined man recollected me; and, in all the fury of his ſoul, imprecated curſes everlaſting on me, and told me he was mine too!

The ſound ſtill vibrates on my ear, and agoniſes every fibre of my heart: it

it was fatal to my peace, and has driven me to deſpair!

Oh, Leſley! dear, raſh youth, how I lament thee!—and thou too, Sigiſmar! yes, for thee I weep! Why do I talk of weeping? No, that bleſſing is denied me; my brain is ſcorched: I would give the world for tears to quench the fire which burns me;—it is intolerable! I ſometimes think my reaſon has forſaken me: yet, I am not mad—I would to heaven I were; for then, 'tis like I ſhould forget myſelf: oh, if I could, what grief ſhould I forget. I am not mad; too well, too well I feel the different plague of each calamity.

You are now informed, of the grounds on which I deſpair of peace in this world, or happineſs in that to come.

Weigh well my offences, and tell me, if you can, from whence I may derive hope of being reconciled to the ſearcher of hearts? The guilt of mine He has witneſſed; He is alſo witneſs to its remorſe!

Your mind is free from perturbation; you can deliberately judge if my crimes are within the reach of mercy. Oh, tell me if my penitence will be accepted hereafter; I aſk nothing here: all the malice of this world I am contented to ſuffer, nor will its puniſhments be light. The friends of the Count de N—— have already laid their fangs on me: to make my infamy public, they have commenced a proſecution to force from me what I offered to reſign; my dower, name, and title: every mortification the law will permit I ſhall be compelled to endure: this is all the injury

injury they can do me. My fortune is too ample to be hurt by what they can deprive me of, were I even anxious for its preſervation, but that time is paſt! Wealth has no longer any hold upon my heart; he for whom I anxiouſly preſerved it, has periſhed by that anxiety; and as to my title, it has been a title of wretchedneſs; I ſhall gladly reſign it, in the hope that I may, by changing my name, be leſs known, and of courſe leſs deteſted.

My ambition was once to make a noiſe in the world; to be the object of its gaze; the ſubject of its converſation. Heaven! how am I changed! I would now ſink into nothing, I would not be ſeen or heard of; I would not even have it remembered that I had exiſted. Alas! how wretched is my ſtate! I am fallen into the ſear, the

yellow leaf: and that which ſhould accompany old age, as honour, love, obedience, troops of friends, I muſt not look to have; but, in their ſtead, curſes, not loud, but deep.

I am wearying you with my complaints, I know I am; but bear with me: it is a relief, the only one fate has left, nor does the univerſe contain another being on whom I could have intruded my unhappy ſtory. Friends I have none; my acquaintances have forſaken me, and my kindred are bound to execrate me: you will probably join with the multitude in abhorring me; nay, I look on it as certain: yet, even this could not repel the deſire I had to give vent to my oppreſſed heart, by communicating its ſorrows, which I have now accompliſhed, and am indifferent to the reception they may meet:

yet,

yet it would be a conſolation to know, that in all created ſpace there is one boſom that would heave a ſigh for my calamities; one tongue that would ſay, "I pity her." But it cannot be—even the hirelings which live on my bounty do not conceal their contempt; they obey my commands with reluctance, which ſhews neceſſity alone makes them ſubſervient.

I am ſurrounded with wealth and grandeur; my apartments are magnificent; my table is ſumptuous: the firſt contains every thing that art has invented to engage the attention, or delight the eye; the latter abounds with every luxury that can pleaſe the palate. I am clad in the richeſt produce of the different and moſt diſtant parts of the globe; I have vaſſals at my command, and I have gold more than enough;

what cannot it purchaſe? Why am I not happy?—am I blind, inſenſible, and taſteleſs? No: what then do I want?—peace of mind. Gold, thou canſt not buy me that! and without it thou canſt not give enjoyment. But of what avail are thoſe too late reflections? Alas, of none! unleſs to add to my deſpair, and that needs no addition. Farewell to them, then, and to thee, too, Bell! thou wilt be glad to ſee that word, and ſo again farewell!

N——.

This is the laſt time I ſhall uſe that name, and to which I never had a juſt title.

LETTER XLVI.

THE HON. CHARLES MACKENZIE TO THE EARL OF D——.

My honoured Lord and Father,

WILL, I truſt, excuſe my unintentional neglect in letting ſo many days paſs without his hearing from me, which a number of avocations of an unpleaſant nature has prevented my doing. I am juſt returned from the trial of that degraded woman the late Counteſs of N——, now wife of Sigiſmar; a title

ſhe as little merits, and, in my opinion, has leſs claim to.

The relations of the Earl have neglected nothing which could publiſh her infamy, or mortify her pride; poor woman!—the latter ſeems entirely ſubdued. She pleaded guilty to every charge brought againſt her; and, addreſſing the jury, ſaid, the only requeſt ſhe had to make was, that they would haſten her departure from that place: ſhe was indifferent to what other they might ſend her. As her marriage with Sigiſmar was proved, as alſo that with the Count de N——, ſhe was convicted of bigamy, and likewiſe ſeveral other offences which the arrival of her ſteward, who appeared againſt her, had brought to light.

The

The judge, in a very pathetic ſpeech, informed her, that the extent of her crimes was ſuch as would, were the law to be enforced, reach her life; but, from reſpect to her birth, and compaſſion to her ſex, the ſeverity of her ſentence would be mitigated to the puniſhment of one year's impriſonment, and reſtoring to the family of the Earl all the various ſums of money ſhe had unjuſtly defrauded them of, by paſſing as his wife and widow.

She replied, that after the humiliation ſhe had undergone, to live would add to her ſhame; notwithſtanding which, ſhe begged his lordſhip would believe ſhe received with gratitude the mercy of her country, and bent, with thankfulneſs, for the fairneſs of her trial, nor would ſhe, a ſecond time, defeat its lenity.

She now withdrew, and was followed by the hiſſes and curſes of the mob, which ſurrounded her carriage, and inſulted her in the moſt abuſive language, from which they proceeded to threats of tearing her to pieces.

The officers, in whoſe charge ſhe was, were unequal to protect her; the confuſion became prodigious; thoſe who were only looking on had no other expectation than to ſee the wretched woman fall a victim to the fury of a ſet of unthinking beings, who were for revenging the wrongs of people they cared not about, and puniſhing offences in which they had no intereſt; but this was of no conſequence to them: ſome officious, or rather miſchievous perſon, had told them they ought to act thus, and that was ſufficient; they waited not to conſult their reaſon. I, among many other

other ſpectators, diſapproved of what was paſſing, but dared not attempt to reſcue the ſufferer, as we concluded we might, with equal ſafety, encounter as many maniacs, to ſuch a pitch of frenzy had they wrought themſelves.

In this perilous ſituation was the poor affrighted wretch, when, on a ſudden, Dr. Howard appeared among the crowd; and, forcing his way to the carriage, from which they were dragging her, he ſternly bade them inſtantly deſiſt!—demanding how they dared to attempt defeating the laws of their country, by ſnatching a victim to them from the puniſhment they had deemed her offences deſerved. Whether the boldneſs of the attempt, the authority he aſſumed, or the venerable majeſticneſs of his figure awed them, I cannot determine; but they ſeemed unnerved,

and ſuffered him, without oppoſition, to replace her in her ſeat, which he did, ſaying:

"Go, unhappy, guilty woman! and atone to your offended country, by incurring the penalty its juſtice has inflicted."

At this moment ſeeing me in the crowd, he called me, deſiring I would aſſiſt him in guarding to priſon that unhappy culprit, who a miſguided people had taken from thoſe their King had thought proper to place over her. I haſtened to him, which was very eaſy, as every one made way for me to paſs: and the beings who had a moment before obſtructed the officers of juſtice in the execution of their duty, would now have been equally violent in their defence;—ſuch is the inſtability of a

mob!

mob! But what other can be expected from men who yield up their reaſon, and ſubmit to be guided by the whim or prejudice of others? yet, there are thoſe who court even this kind of popularity, who think, if the number of voices are in their favour, no matter whether prudence or folly dictated the approval.

Well, much joy may ſuch a victory give them; to me it would be none; for, I ſhould feel more honoured, and derive more pleaſure in loſing my cauſe, with ten reaſoning men on my ſide, than by gaining it with a vaſt majority of thoſe unthinking beings. I may poſſibly be wrong, but I build not on ſuch popularity as the vulgar mind can give.

But to return to my ſubject: I accompanied the Dean to the carriage, and we were permitted to purſue our way without other moleſtation than loud huzzas as marks of approbation, which continued to alarm the terrified priſoner, till we were out of reach of the noiſe. When her fears began to ſubſide, which allowed her time to recollect in whoſe company ſhe was, and to whom ſhe had been indebted for her preſervation, it was a painful recollection; the confuſion it occaſioned was manifeſt: ſhe appeared, for a moment, to ſtruggle with her feelings. At length, falling on her knees, ſhe claſped thoſe of her injured relation; and, in the moſt ſervile and humble manner, confeſſed her crimes, and implored forgiveneſs—nor was I forgot; almoſt the ſame ſcene being acted over to me. Had ſhe been born the meaneſt reptile

of

of the earth, ſhe could not have been more miſerably humble; all the dignity, all the grace of manner for which ſhe has ever been celebrated, vaniſhed.

I felt myſelf ſhocked, and turned to Dr. Howard, expecting to ſee him diſtreſſed; but contempt and indignation were viſible in his countenance. As ſoon as ſhe would permit him to ſpeak, he told her, this was the firſt moment of his having conceived anger againſt her:—he had pitied her miſtakes; he had lamented her errors, and grieved for her ſorrows; but he now felt indignation at her meanneſs. She had petitioned for pardon, and confeſſed her miſdeeds in a manner no earthly being was worthy to be addreſſed, and had humbled herſelf unworthy a creature who poſſeſſed a ſoul.

We

We had now reached the priſon, where we conſigned our charge over to the keeper. On our return, the Dean was ſilent, and ſeemed loſt in thought: I ſpoke to him, but he did not heed me; I repeated what I had ſaid, which rouſed him: he apologized for his inattention, but ſaid, the ſcene we had juſt witneſſed had occupied his mind.

I took this opportunity of expreſſing my aſtoniſhment at the intrepidity with which he had encountered the mob; and added, he muſt either be the raſheſt, or moſt courageous of human beings. He aſſured me he was neither. I remarked he muſt then have been ignorant of the immenſe danger he ran, which was greater than myſelf, and fifty people who were preſent and well inclined to aſſiſt me, dare encounter. He replied, that might very well be; but

but that one man might undertake and be ſucceſsful, when fifty would certainly fail: I told him this appeared unaccountable to me, and begged he would explain, which he did in theſe words:

"A mob, ſuch as we have ſeen this day, are chiefly compoſed of ignorant people, who act from no principle, nor any other motive than that they ſee others do ſo; therefore there is no determination or malice in their minds—it is mere wantonneſs; when this is the caſe, it is not difficult to change their object, if you can once gain their attention. To do this, you muſt ſurpriſe them; had your fifty oppoſed them, they would have thought themſelves bound to treat you as preſumptuous intruders; but one defenceleſs, unarmed man was beneath their vengeance. The human heart, when unagitated by the

ſpirit

ſpirit of revenge, is ſuſceptible of every generous feeling, which there is nothing more likely to call forth than the appearance of courage that cannot be termed oppoſition.

" In this light was my late conduct beheld by the unlettered multitude; they knew I could not mean to combat my ſtrength with theirs: they were ſenſible, in one moment they could make me mute as the earth on which we ſtood—they were certain I could have nothing to hope, or they to fear, from my intruſion: they thought there was ſomething more than common daring in it, and they were awed. Had I allowed their amazement to ſubſide, I had loſt my cauſe; entreaties would have had no effect; but, by aſſuming a tone of command, and accuſing them of unlawful proceedings,

I kept

I kept the aſcendancy I had gained, till the returning reaſon of ſome, (for even among this mob there were thoſe who at times could reaſon) convinced them I was right, and the fears of others convinced them they were wrong: for I have ever obſerved the mind is timid, and ſuſceptible of terror when engaged in an unlawful act. Thus you ſee all the merit I can claim I derive from my knowledge of mankind; I have long made the human heart my ſtudy, and I am of opinion its evil diſpoſitions are the growth of habit and education, and not implanted by nature; ſhe performs her part, and leaves the finiſhing to us—it is we who are unjuſt to ourſelves and each other, and then ſeek for ſhelter by throwing the blame on her.

" Think

" Think you nature ever formed ſo unlovely a mind as the wretched woman we have juſt quitted? No, no, my friend, it is faſhion and diſſipation have weakened it, and left it vacant, a prey to every inclination that wears the aſpect of pleaſure. From the heart where virtue abides not, vice will not long be abſent; and where it once gets poſſeſſion, if not timely eradicated, it takes root, and becomes, as it were, conſtitutional. The whole temper of the ſoul is changed; nature can no longer trace any of her work; ſhe diſowns and abandons what ſhe conſiders as a diſgrace to her.

" Thus left to itſelf the heart becomes hard, it is callous to the pleadings of humanity, and deaf to the voice of conſcience; it ruſhes forward, eager to remove every obſtacle to its own gratifica-

gratification, without reflecting that cruelty and injuſtice mark its progreſs. The rapidity with which it proceeds, ſeldom gives it time to weigh the conſequences which will moſt probably follow; the preſent moment is its idol; it looks not beyond it. Preſuming on its paſt ſucceſs, it grows confident; all dread of detection vaniſhes: the word puniſhment is forgot, or if it will ſometimes force itſelf upon the recollection, the idea that it may, as hitherto, be avoided, ſoon baniſhes it. Thus lulled into ſecurity, it loſes ſight of its wonted precaution, and haſtens that chaſtiſement which ſeldom fails to overtake the offending.

" How will a heart, in ſuch a ſtate, receive correction? Deſtitute of fortitude, can it patiently ſupport calamity? No.—Will the ſenſe of its deſervings leſſen

leſſen its ſufferings? Alas, no.—It will aggravate them; it will fill it with deſpair!

"In this grievous ſituation is the poor fallen woman we ſaw but now debaſe herſelf; in my eyes ſhe appeared to ſink beneath the dignity of human nature: I was diſguſted with her ſervility to two beings, which, a few days ſince ſhe would have conſidered as her inferiors: yet, we were then as much injured by her as now. To you ſhe had refuſed to liſten; and my unhappy houſe ſhe had involved in ruin. She felt not for my ſorrows; ſhe regretted not her crimes. What, then, has awakened her repentance?—detection. Detection alone cauſes her remorſe, and can conſcience ſleep ſo ſound? will nothing but the contempt of the world rouſe it?

"Oh,

" Oh, my friend, I wiſh her penitence had ariſen from a nobler cauſe; had her confeſſions and deprecation been the effuſions of a contrite boſom, with what joy would I have poured conſolation into it. But here is not the humility of penitence, it is the meanneſs of wounded pride. She has diſguſted me—I will ſee her no more—I will no more receive the homage due only to him that made me. I had hoped to have been of ſervice to her, to have taught her to deſerve and rely on the mercy of her offended God; but my efforts would be fruitleſs: it is not her crimes ſhe repents, it is the conſequences they have produced.

" Had our poor lamented William been the friendleſs unknown ſhe believed him, all would have been well; it is for her child ſhe weeps, not for the injured

injured ſuicide. The loſs of Howard's hope would not have drawn one tear; the frantic Matilda's ravings would have cauſed no regret; I and my ſorrows would have been deſpiſed! Yes, yes, all her humility was dictated by fear; ſhe knew ſhe had ruined me, and ſeeing herſelf in my power, ſhe thought I would retaliate. Poor woman, ſhe knows me not! ſhe has plunged a dagger in my boſom, yet would I have plucked a thorn from her's."

We had now reached Mrs. Paulet's, where I parted with my venerable inſtructor. Having now performed the laſt ſad offices of humanity to my departed friend, I ſhall leave town, and once more viſit the ſolitude of Sigiſmar, where I ſhall remain as long as I ſee my preſence can contribute to the ſatisfaction of this unhappy father; from thence I have

I have promiſed to go to Dr. Howard's; I ſhall find both the abodes of ſorrow, but they will the better ſuit the melancholy temper of my mind. I ſhall write to your lordſhip as occaſion requires, or opportunity offers; till when I remain, my honoured lord and father,

Your affectionate and obedient Son,

CHARLES MACKENZIE.

LETTER XLVII.

LORD VERNON TO SIR HENRY DORSET.

WHERE the devil, Harry, do you think I am ſitting to write this letter? Gueſs, gueſs, my dear boy; puzzle your head, I was on the point of ſaying brain, but I fortunately recollected you would not bear to be laughed at. Well, have you found out my abode? No, nor never would, were you to ſtrive till Belzebub calls you to the next world to repay you for the aſſiſtance you have given him in this; but that is ſaying nothing; for moſt probably his high mightineſs will ſhorten the abſence

ſence of ſo faithful a ſervant, and then, my lad, you will reap the reward ſo liberal a maſter muſt know to be your due. As for myſelf, I ſhall give him a diſcharge; he owes me nothing: he has been ſo bounteous of his infernal favours in this life, that I ſhall have nothing to receive in that which the knowing ones ſay is to come.

But, once more, where am I? What! you think I have got the ſtart of you, and am already with your cloven footed friend! You never was farther from the truth in all your life; no, never. I ſee your amazement; I hear your exclamations. "Never further from the truth! how diſtant muſt he be! Why, ſure enough then he muſt be in heaven" Better gueſſed; for I am ſurrounded by heavenly bodies, as you ſhall hear.

First, there is the Right Reverend Father in God his Grace of ——, who, you know, has ſometimes called me nephew; and next there is the Dean of ——, who, if I am a good child, will allow me to call him papa! You ſee I am in the midſt of my relations; beſides, there is my aunt, of proſtrate memory, and my ſiſter Emma, and my ſpouſe: all this goodly company are aſſembled at my papa's Deanry houſe. Now ſhut your mouth, and take breath; leave off ſtaring, and liſten while I inform you why I came here, and how we have been employed ſince I came.

The prelate, it ſeems, was informed of my having prevented Leſley from being hanged, which induced him to write me a letter, in which he was graciouſly pleaſed to tell me, though I had proved myſelf as great a fool in the conduct-

conducting that buſineſs as in every other circumſtance of my inglorious life; yet, as it was deſtitute of the villany and meanneſs which had hitherto marked my actions, and wore the aſpect of juſtice and humanity, he had been induced to form a hope that ſome corner of my heart had eſcaped the general depravity; and then he obligingly adds, "if this is really the caſe and you feel within your breaſt any ſymptom of honour and virtue, and are inclined to encourage its culture, I will aſſiſt you in the undertaking with my countenance and counſel; but, my lord, do not attempt to deceive me, if you do, you only deceive yourſelf; I am not to be impoſed on: you have already deſtroyed my opinion of your ſincerity to ſuch a degree as to make it neceſſary for me to have ſome proofs of it before

I appear to the world as your friend. The proofs I demand are theſe:

" Return to England, and let your abode be at the houſe of the man whoſe fatal connection with you has proved ruinous to his peace and family; you will there find your ill-fated wife, but not ſuch as you received her; your baſeneſs has driven her to madneſs; ſhe is a poor wandering maniac. Unite your endeavours to thoſe of her ſorrowing relations to reſtore her to reaſon and tranquillity; you have nothing to fear from her juſt reproaches, for, alas! memory is no more!—all is a blank! Thoſe who have deſtroyed her intellectual powers, and thoſe who would die to reſtore them, are alike unknown; every thing is forgotten, or the traces of recollection ſo faint and tranſitory, that they are ſcarcely diſcernible: this

I think

I think is in your favour; for, wrecked as ſhe is, ſhe is ſtill ſenſible of, and grateful for attentions. You will have opportunity to gain upon her affections which it is not probable you would do whilſt the remembrance of her wrongs, and the hatred ſhe had borne you, were awake.

"I have told you what my advice is, and leave you to follow or reject it, as ſhall beſt ſuit you; therefore I have only to add, that the manner you conduct yourſelf in this, will regulate me."

Weary as I was of my ſituation, I thought any change muſt be for the better; I therefore loſt no time in proving my obedience by preſenting myſelf at the Deanry, where I was received with the ſolemnity of an under-

taker, whoſe buſineſs was to put the laſt hope of the family under ground.

The maſter of the rookery (for theſe gentry ſeem to have had abſolute dominion here from the days of Noah) came to receive me; his countenance was ſolemn; his hand trembled as he took mine; and his tongue faltered as if to give the lie to the welcome it was compelled to pronounce.

Miſs Emma then appeared, but burſt into tears the moment ſhe ſaw me, and haſtily retreated. My dictatorial relation and his ſpouſe were here before me, but did not condeſcend to let me view their gracious phizzes till the notice of the mutton being on the board expedited their attendance. The feaſt was awful; the Dean and his daughter were ſorrowful: the Biſhop ſat wrapt

up

up in ſulky dignity, not deigning to look at, or addreſs; indeed, not one of this goodly company ever turn their eyes on me.

The Dean and his Emma ſpeak wonderfully civil, but it is with an averted eye: now this, by either my own rule or my uncle's, is a bad ſign; mine is, whenever I converſe with thoſe I hate, to look at any thing but their face; and my honourable relation has a thouſand times obſerved to me, that in his life he never met my eye, and that conſequently I was aſhamed to meet his. To which of thoſe ſenſations I am indebted I leave you to determine, while I proceed with our repaſt.

My aunt ſoon convinced me of the goodneſs of her recollection, by refuſing the ſeat I recommended, and

taking that at the greateſt diſtance from me. The meal being finiſhed, the two dignitaries converſed on ſcriptural ſubjects: this effectually cloſed my mouth, for it was all hebrew to me. My good aunt ſeemed to be no better entertained, for ſhe indulged herſelf in a comfortable nap, and the gentle Emma retired to a corner and wept.

From this pleaſant ſituation we were rouſed by the entrance of Lady Vernon, decked out in all the flowers of the field! ſhe appeared heated and fatigued: after ſeating herſelf for a moment, ſhe was returning to the door ſhe had entered at, when Niobe (for the weeping Emma is entitled to this name, as ſhe will certainly reſemble that lady in her fate) entreated her not to go out any more that evening; but ſhe being unſucceſsful, the Biſhop's lady poſted herſelf

herſelf in the portal, and attempted to oblige her to return to her chair. Whether ſhe was diſguſted by her figure, or offended by her roughneſs, I know not; but, after ſurveying her with a countenance expreſſive of ſurpriſe and contempt, ſhe withdrew her hand from the old lady's graſp, and, aſſuming a look of conſequence, with a tone of command ſhe enquired, Where are all my ſervants? Let Lady Vernon's coach draw up. Then curtſeying low to the company, ſhe hurried out with the dignity of a Ducheſs, quitting the drawing room after having had precedence of all the worſhippers of royalty, who had that day bent the knee of adulation.

Deep drawn ſighs followed her exit, and a general ſilence enſued; to break which I aſked (not for information) in a piteous voice, Where will ſhe now go?

when old huff bluff replied, in a churliſh voice, and with a knit brow, "Go and ſee: what did you come here for?" I obeyed from a hearty deſire I had to get quit of him and his companions.

I wandered about till dark; but, as I conceive neither the lady or I ſought each other, we did not meet: ſo, on my return (as I found by the ſervants ſhe was not yet come home) I ſaid I could not prevail on her to let me ſtay any longer; that ſhe ſeemed moſt anxious to be alone, and fled from me. I then gaily added, "the lovely maniac bounded o'er the plain. Ah me, the victim of an angry ſky!—ah me, the victim of her proud diſdain!"

All theſe goodly perſonages ſtared at me with amazement. I concluded I had aſtoniſhed them with the depth of

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my reading; but the exclamation, "Unfeeling monſter!" which eſcaped in a raven-like tone from the delicate lungs of my affectionate aunt, convinced me I had miſinterpreted their wonder; and as the devil, who is always ready to do me a good turn would have it, ſhe entered the room, leaning on the arm of that pedant Mackenzie, who had, on his way to this agreeable houſe, (the maſter of which he has come to viſit) picked her up in the fields, and was already in high favour with her lunatic ladyſhip.

The preſence of this coxcomb brightened the countenance of every animal preſent, except my own; for, had old Belzebub, your friend, made his appearance *in propria perſona*, he would have been full as welcome as this jackanapes.

I inſtantly

I inſtantly recollected a viſit he had made me, and I did not doubt he would take this opportunity of returning the civilities he then received; but no—he is above all that; for, rather uneaſy about the conſequences, I took the firſt opportunity of making a ſpeech, a kind of a ſomething like an apology. On which he looked in my face in an odd, contemptuous, pitying kind of way, and bade me be under no apprehenſion, as this was not the time he ſhould take to chaſtiſe my inſolence; adding, the laws of hoſpitality, and the feelings of humanity, were my ſafeguards for the preſent. He was of opinion no third family ought to be diſturbed by our diſſentions; but the ſorrows of this, rendered it more particularly the object of reſpectful attention: and with this fine ſentiment he left me.

Damn

Damn his ſentiment! and damn his impertinence! and damn my folly, which is for ever leading me into ſcrapes, out of which I cannot extricate myſelf from the want of courage. Why dare I do that which I dare not juſtify when done? or why was I born with a temper to feel the ſnubs I receive from every ſcoundrel. No, no, I miſtake; it is honeſt men who ſnub me; were I honeſt, ſcoundrels dare not inſult me, and honeſt men would have no reaſon.

Why I am moralizing!—abſolutely and *bona fide* moralizing! Oh, I muſt quit this infernal place; for what with the rooks without, and the croakers within, I am not myſelf. Yes, I will depart, and leave this man of ſentiment in full poſſeſſion of all my rights; he may continue to catch graſshoppers, chace butterflies, and gather poſies for his maniac

maniac companion. He may climb mountains, wade through rivers, and weep in the ſhade with her. He may weave garlands; he may go to the devil; and I wiſh from my ſoul he and ſhe were both there; for mad as ſhe is, I cannot endure to ſee the fondneſs ſhe laviſhes on him. She knows him not, ſhe knows not me; yet, witleſs as ſhe is, and wild as her ideas are, ſhe ſmiles at his approach, and trembles at mine: ſhe leans on his arm, repoſes on his boſom; ſhe even eats at his requeſt, a compliment ſhe ſeldom pays to any other being; for ſhe has learned to live without food or reſt, whilſt ſhe takes exerciſe that would deſtroy any body but herſelf. But I will go hence, and leave him and his huntreſs to range the woods together, for I am ſick, curſedly ſick of the whole pack.

I this

I this morning entered the breakfaſt room, where they were all aſſembled: I happened to ſit oppoſite Lady Vernon; on a ſudden her attention ſeemed attracted. She looked earneſtly in my face for ſome moments, then coming nearer as if to examine me more minutely, her look became frighted, and ſhe retreated to the ſide of her garland weaver, and drawing his arm round her waiſt, ſhe hid her face in his boſom. He aſked her if ſhe knew me? ſhe ſlowly ſhook her head and ſaid, "Very well:" they were all aſtoniſhed, and eagerly aſked who it was, but ſhe was ſilent till he entreated her to tell him. She then, in a low voice, ſaid:

"Do you not know? Why he is the hangman; let us go or he will hang us: don't you ſee how he looks at us, and what terrible eyes he has!"

I could

I could ſee by the looks of all preſent, that they thought ſhe was not far out in her ideas, and I haſtened to quit a ſociety that was equally irkſome to them and me, and I will haſten to quit it for ever; ſo adieu. You will hear no more of me from the rookery, nor am I determined whither to take myſelf. I ſeem like Cain, to have a mark on me, that all men may know and ſhun me—ſo be it, if the dear, delightful little devils of the other ſex will but continue their admiration, I ſhall ſtill ſing—*Io triompho.*

Adieu, adieu,

VERNON.

LETTER

LETTER XLVIII.

Deanry Houſe.

THE HON. CHARLES MACKENZIE, TO LORD ——.

MY honoured lord will perceive, by the place from whence I date, that I have left the unhappy father of my ill-fated friend, and he will be anxious to know in what ſtate of mind he then was; I wiſh I could give a more favourable account than my obſervations have authoriſed; yet, he is comparatively happy. The paſſion which ſhook him has ceaſed; his murmurs are alſo ſilenced; he is greatly altered, "nor

the

the outward, nor the inward man, reſembles what it was:" his eyes, where fierceneſs dwelt, are fixed on the earth; the loud voice of accuſation has ſunk into humble ſupplications, a dejection, I think, never to be removed, has ſeized his heart. His ſpirit is ſubdued; not even the recollection of his wretched wife can rouſe it: could I have been of uſe, I would have prolonged my ſtay; but I perceived my preſence rather embarraſſed, than conſoled him.

In changing my abode, I changed not from ſcenes of ſorrow, for this is the abode of grief. The poor Lady Vernon precludes all poſſibility of forgetfulneſs; her ſituation is a conſtant ſubject of woe: haply for her ſhe is inſenſible of the miſery ſhe creates. How ſtrikingly are thoſe words verified in her, "the Lord tempers the wind

to

to the ſhorn lamb," for ſhe is ſhorn to the quick; yet, ſhe is not unhappy, farther than reſtleſſneſs. She is conſtantly employed in ranging the fields, adorning her perſon, or drawing faces, which ſhe carefully hides in her boſom when done. Sometimes, indeed, ſhe plays on her harpſicord, accompanying it with her voice.

But theſe are not her happieſt moments; her muſic is wild and plaintive, and ſhe appears diſturbed and dejected; ſhe knows not her father or ſiſter, notwithſtanding which, I am confident ſhe had ſome recollection of her worthleſs lord, who has been here; his preſence ever rendered her uneaſy.

I ſometimes think ſhe likewiſe has a glimmering of memory reſpecting me, though, I believe, ſhe never ſaw me, except

except the fatal day ſhe gave her hand at the altar, when I was preſent, and could not refrain from teſtifying, by my look, the horror and contempt I felt.

She has ſeveral times when I have been engaged in little offices of kindneſs for her, aſked me if I did not hate her, and where I had been for a long time, when I was angry with her? Yeſterday, after looking for ſome time penſively in my face, ſhe aſked me if I had not once a friend?

Theſe traces of recollection, if they are ſuch, have lately become more frequent; and the Biſhop has inſiſted on her, with her father and ſiſter, accompanying him to London to try what effect medical advice will have.

We

We accordingly leave this place in a few days; I have promiſed to ſpend a ſhort time with my fellow travellers, after which I ſhall haſten to pay my duty to my honoured lord and father.

CHARLES MACKENZIE.

LETTER XLIX.

LORD VERNON TO SIR HENRY DORSET.

THE demon of diſcord has laid his clutches on me, from which he ſeems determined never more to ſet me free. Surely I preſaged right when I told you old cloven foot did mean to have nothing to ſay to me in t'other country; and upon my ſoul I think, if he had any conſcience he might have done with me in this. I have no opinion of his devilſhip; he cannot be a lad of ſpirit, or he would be weary of attending one poor mortal! Were he one of us, Harry, he would ſeek variety; but no ſuch thing—I am his only object:

ject: I certainly have been a faithful ſubject, ſerving him with all my powers, but ſo have others.

You, Hal, have done your utmoſt as far as your intellectual abilities would let you; and that, in my opinion, ſhould entitle you to your reward; for I am not ſuch a ſelfiſh ſcoundrel as to wiſh to engroſs all his remembrance: I would be content to quit ſcores with him this hour; and for the remainder of my life ſhould be delighted to ſee you the object of his unlimited gratitude and bounty. But perhaps I have named a ſhort period, for my life is at preſent in jeopardy.

What doſt think, Harry? I am going to fight a duel!—aye, and in earneſt too! no jeſting here; ſhooting off a button; no, nor grazing a cheek

will not do this time! I muſt either kill, or be killed, therefore you may depend on my endeavours to do the firſt; and I have hope of ſucceſs, for my antagoniſt is one of thoſe heroes whoſe blood ruſhes into his head at the ſight of a ſcoundrel, and ſuch he terms me. Now, I have obſerved, that people in this ſituation are raſh and unguarded, and I ſhall not neglect to take the advantage my coolneſs will give me over him. Cool I ſhall be, as I have conſidered the matter, and I plainly ſee a coward may fight a duel, but he muſt be a brave man who dares decline it. I would have aſked you to be the witneſs of my putting this blockhead to ſleep, but he would not give me time to ſend for you; ſo our brother in iniquity, St. Aubin, is to have that honour; he is gone to fix the hour—five this evening I have named.

The

The cauſe of this broil was no new thing; no eclat attending it, ſave what is to come from my ſhooting the coxcomb. He is a man of war; a hero of the blade; the ſon of an invalid captain, whoſe daughter I took ſome liberties with two years ſince; or, more properly ſpeaking, whoſe name; for ſhe was ſo curſedly tenacious of her perſon that I never could get at the end of her finger.

I met the youth at the piazza; there was no other perſon preſent, and we entered into converſation. I talked of my late return from Paris, when he ſuddenly aſked me if I had met with an English lord there of the name of Vernon? I did not much like the manner of his enquiry, ſo I coolly anſwered "yes;" he ſaid he was going

there in ſearch of him on particular buſineſs.

Not having been in the habit of being ſought after from friendly motives, made me judge it beſt to learn his buſineſs before I diſcovered my name.

"Well, ſir, I wiſh you ſucceſs, but I doubt it; for I conclude money is your purſuit, and I fancy his lordſhip has been too liberal of that commodity to have much remaining."

The words had ſcarcely paſſed my lips, when he vociferated,

"His lordſhip is an infamous ſcoundrel! Liberal, ſir! he was never liberal of any thing but lies and villany!"

I ſhrugged

I ſhrugged up my ſhoulders, and begged pardon if, by my ignorance of his lordſhip's real character, I had given offence. He was ſoftened, and related to me the whole affair of his ſiſter and myſelf, with a degree of exactneſs that aſtoniſhed me. Upon my ſoul, had the ſtory been in my favour, and I had been to give it on my oath, I could not have adhered to truth as he did: for you know, Harry, I never was a matter-of-fact man.

When he had finiſhed, I agreed with him that it was a raſcally buſineſs, and deſerved the moſt exemplary puniſhment; but, I added, I feared the wretch would be out of the reach of chaſtiſement, as I knew he was to leave Paris for Rome about this time; or at leaſt, the day I had heard fixed for his departure, was but three days from hence.

He appeared much alarmed, and ſaid he would purſue him through the world, though eternal ruin ſhould be the conſequence: in ſhort, I found he only waited to get money from the agents of his corps, who was out of town. This I, like a true friend, furniſhed him with; he left me with eyes filled with tears, and a heart burſting with gratitude; whilſt I, with ſome difficulty, ſuppreſſed the ſatisfaction his abſence would give me.

The want of occupation (idleneſs always leads to miſchief) Hal, took me to the piazza the following day, where I met Mackenzie: as the place where he is ſuits not me beſt, I was about to withdraw without appearing to have ſeen him, when who ſhould enter the room but that blockhead Danvers, and cloſe at his heels followed my dear friend,

friend, who I had figured to myſelf on his road to Paris, ready to encounter windmills, or any other Quixotiſh adventure that ſhould offer. He flew to me with open arms, aud what was worſe, open mouth, exclaiming,

"My dear benefactor! my good Mr. Meanwell! (the name I had given myſelf at our former meeting) I am come to repay you the pecuniary part of my obligation, for which I have now no occaſion, as the maſter of the packet in which I had taken my paſſage, informed me he had himſelf brought the ſcoundrel Lord Vernon, of whom I was in purſuit, to England five weeks ſince."

Faith, Dorſet, I felt confounded, nor was I much relieved by Danvers's burſting into a horſe laugh, and coming up

to me with "What the devil plot is a-foot now! a deep one I dare venture my laſt guinea when your lordſhip grows charitable; but how I rave! I forgot; you are no lord! you are plain Mr. Meanwell! Pray Mr. Meanwell! —honeſt Mr. Meanwell!—benevolent Mr. Meanwell! have the goodneſs to let me take the money that gentleman ſeems ſo unwilling to keep."

I bade him ſtop his impertinence, and taking the arm of my grateful friend, who ſtood in ſilent perplexity, after having emphatically pronounced, "Your lordſhip!" after the prating puppy, I deſired him to accompany me to another room, with which he was complying, but Mackenzie, riſing from the corner where he had ſat, placed himſelf between us and the door. I was now obliged to ſee him, ſo,

ſo, aſſuming as much compoſure as I could, I expreſſed my ſurpriſe at meeting him, declaring I did not know he was in the room, or even in town. I then enquired how he had left our friends at the Deanry? and added, with great pathos, is there any hope of my unfortunate ———. Grief would not permit me to proceed: I pauſed and turned away my face to conceal my emotion.

All my fine acting was thrown away; the only attention he, to whom it was addreſſed, honoured me with, was, by meaſuring me from top to toe, with a look that had more meaning in it than volumes could explain. And then, addreſſing my companion, he ſaid:

"Sir, by what has fallen from you, and the knowledge I have of this per-

ſon's character, (mark, Dorſet! this perſon; no title—not even gentleman: nay, plain man was not allowed me: this perſon's character!—devils fly away with his humiliating phraſes!—Why do I dwell on them!—but, once more, perſon's character!) I am led to believe he has deceived you. Do you really ſuppoſe his name to be Mean-well?"

The youth replied, "On entering the room, ſir, I certainly did; but I do not now know what to think."

"On whoſe information, then, did you ground your opinion?"

"On the gentleman's own."

"Then, ſir, he miſinformed you."

Then,

Then, looking at me, "But for what purpoſe your lordſhip can beſt determine: but that to bluſh is not common to you, I ſhould conceive you might, without any great degree of delicacy, be aſhamed to acknowledge you was the head of a once illuſtrious houſe."

He was here interrupted by the young ſoldier, who with warmth entered on my defence, declaring he ſaw and honoured my motive for concealing my title, that it muſt proceed from the fear of oppreſſing a being ſo much inferior in rank as himſelf was; that I was honourable and generous my conduct had proved; I had given him not only advice, but the means to put that advice into execution. I had joined with him in execrating an infamous ſcoundrel, the defamer of an innocent, helpleſs woman.

"Pray," aſked impertinence, "what was the name of this infamous ſcoundrel? for ſuch I agree with you he was."

"Lord Vernon."

"So I ſuſpected."

"Do you then know him, ſir?"

"Better than I wiſh."

"Oh, ſir! inſtruct me where I ſhall find him."

"There he ſtands, ſir, before you! that noble, generous man, who furniſhed you with money and advice to go to Paris in purſuit of himſelf is he! Yes, he is the honourable gentleman who joined

joined in giving up to infamy and vengeance Lord Vernon."

The almoſt petrified youth enquired, "My lord, for ſuch it ſeems you are, is this true? Are you Lord Vernon?"

Determined to get off with the beſt grace I could, I replied, "At your ſervice; for I think you are a gallant fellow; I took a liking to you at firſt ſight. Fighting ſeemed your paſſion, but it never was mine; I always thought it an awkward, clumſy kind of buſineſs, ſo I thought a trip to Paris would put it out of your head, and do you no kind of harm."

I was pauſing to refreſh myſelf with a pinch of Maccabaw, when I meant to have proceeded, but a moſt confounded blow

blow on my cheek deſtroyed my oration, and ſent me reeling to the oppoſite ſide of the room. The company interfered, and prevented a repetition of blows of which I had received ſeveral before I had recovered the firſt onſet ſufficiently to defend myſelf.

The place was now become crowded, and far the greater number being on my adverſary's ſide, I judged it proper to withdraw, after leaving my card.

I was ſoon followed by the curſed Mackenzie, who had accepted the office of being ſecond; I have a deviliſh mind to ſay to avoid being firſt, but perhaps he might hear it, and thereon build a ſecond cauſe where he would be firſt: ſo obſerve, I do not ſay, or even think it.

I deſired

I desired time to settle my private affairs, and was graciously granted twenty four hours. But I see the prelate's carriage at my door, so I will conclude this long epistle, and begin another when he leaves me at liberty, which I heartily hope may be extremely soon.

Adieu till then.

VERNON.

LETTER L.

LORD VERNON IN CONTINUATION.

HE is gone at laſt, denouncing the very two things againſt me which, of all others, I wiſhed to avoid—ſpeedy death in this world, and life eternal in that to come. Yes, he has given the fortune of the day to my antagoniſt, but I will not believe him; yet, all within is not as it ſhould be—his words have damped my ardour, and my ſoul ſhrinks from the very idea of the peril a ſhort hour hence awaits my ſoul! Have I then a ſoul! Pſha, it is too late to queſtion; therefore, to take me from ſuch enquiries,

enquiries, I will proceed to ſuch particulars of my late viſit, as occur to my memory, for I have totally loſt the thread of my laſt letter, and muſt do ſomething to employ the time till the hour of appointment arrives.

Previous to the prelate's entering my apartment, I had diſpoſed of my writing utenſils; apprehending his finding me engaged with them might lead him to ſuppoſe I was ſettling my worldly matters, that I expected to die, and had commenced ſnivler on the occaſion. I caught up a volume of the Jockey Club, and lolling on the ſofa, pretended to read ſo attentively as not immediately to perceive his entrance, for which I apologized, ſaying, (as I threw down the book) that it had a good deal engroſſed me. He took it up, but one glance at the title page

was

was ſufficient, for he indignantly dropped it, and ſeemed inclined to depart without further communication; but, after pauſing for a moment, he returned, and the following converſation took place:

"My lord, I have been informed that you this day are, nay, the very next hour, to meet a fellow creature you have injured, (each armed againſt the other's life) with the fell determination, that the blood of one of you muſt end the conteſt. Is this true?"

"Moſt true, my dear uncle!"

"And is it poſſible, that at a moment like this, when your next action plunges you into death or murder, that you can, regardleſs of the horrors that await you, ſo ſhockingly miſuſe the little

little remnant of time which is given to ſupplicate the Being whoſe laws you have broken, whoſe name you have blaſphemed, and whoſe power you have ridiculed! Oh, Lord Vernon, you are in a perilous ſtate! Eternity is at hand; your adverſary is tenfold armed; juſtice is on his ſide, and will not let him fall. Bethink you, therefore, that eternal miſery muſt be your dreadful portion!"

"He ſtopped for breath, and I, eager to prevent his proceeding, took his arm, ſaying, "My Lord Biſhop, if I had not the courage of an Hercules, you would make me a coward; you are a perfect inquiſitor, threatening nothing but death and torments. But I have better hope, as you ſhall ſee:" and leading him to a full length portrait of my father, which I had this morning employed

employed myſelf in ſhooting at, by way of bringing my hand in, I proceeded: "Look here, my lord! obſerve the old gentleman's embroidery! —it is ſomething the worſe for this morning's engagement! The curls of his peruke are a little deranged—but what's become of his Mecklen cravat? Here is devaſtation!—gone by Jupiter!—not a thread left!—well, it was always a favourite of the old boy's heart, and I have not ſeparated them; they are gone together! No leſs than three times through his ſtomach! Why this would be a doſe for an alderman! Now what thinks my Lord Biſhop? Has he not ſome hopes of his nephew?"

The idea of my probable ſucceſs, had raiſed my ſpirits, and I ſhould have proceeded in this pleaſant manner for half

half an hour longer, had not a deep and diſmal groan from the prelate called my attention to him. His eyes were fixed on the picture, which he ſurveyed for ſome time with a look of ſilent horror: at length he ſaid, in a low, ſolemn voice, as if talking to himſelf:

"Yes, yes, his heart is quite gone! torn to pieces—his noble heart! Oh, my princely brother! That fine countenance, too, is defaced! But thou art beyond the reach of inſult!—not even the depravity of your wretched offſpring can ſhake your tranquillity; yet, if you are ſenſible of his loſt ſtate, plead for him, ingrate as he is! Plead for him to that God with whom thou dwelleſt! Remind him, that to this poor creature he only gave the form, not the nature of man!—implore him to pity his deficiencies, and to let the

virtues

virtues of the diſgraced, inſulted father, in ſome degree operate as a mitigation of his manifold and dark offences!"

Upon my ſoul I thought the man was bewitched, to be ſeized with a praying fit ſo ſuddenly; for I did not comprehend, at firſt, I had been the ſubject of this fine ſoliloquy. The ridiculouſneſs of a Biſhop's talking to a piece of tattered canvas, ſtruck me ſo forcibly, that I burſt out laughing. He ſtared as if your friend Belze had been at his elbow, and giving me one of his benign looks, he hurried to the door; but, ſeeming to recollect himſelf, he turned, and looking wiſtfully round the apartment, he haſtened to a table in it, and taking the green cloth that covered it, he carefully wrapped it round the picture, concealing the face with anxious circumſpection. He then rang the bell,

bell, and, on my valet's appearing, he deſired him to ſend up both his ſervants. When they came, he gave them directions to remove that picture to his houſe; they obeyed, and he followed without uttering one ſyllable, or honouring me with one of his gracious looks. I walked after to the ſtair's head, humbly begging an explanation of what had paſſed, but the old boy was abſolutely too nimble for me. The eagerneſs he ſhewed to eſcape, made me deſiſt purſuing him; for I was apprehenſive this unuſual activity might ſend his head, to give notice his heels were on the journey; ſo giving up the chace, I returned, and, as I before told you, thought of you to keep me from thinking of myſelf.

But my hour of triumph is at hand; ſo I muſt bid you adieu for a while, as I ſuppoſe,

I ſuppoſe, plebeian as this fellow is, I muſt keep out of the way till I have ſettled matters with his connections, which will probably coſt me money.

You, I dare ſay, will be anxious to know the reſult, for which I refer you to your own morning paper; I particularize that becauſe I can vouch for the authenticity, having myſelf this morning ſtated the whole affair as I intend it ſhall happen. You will there read, that Lord Vernon, from the firſt, was forced into the quarrel; that even at the ground he wiſhed the matter might be ſettled, but the obſtinacy of his adverſary and his friend making any accommodation, conſiſtent with a gentleman, impoſſible, his lordſhip declined the chance of firing firſt, declaring he ſought not the blood of any human creature; that he came there to ſatisfy his

his honour, not his vengeance. His antagoniſt then fired, but miſſed; his lordſhip returned the fire, which unfortunately lodged in the body of the raſh young man, who had ſo imprudently forced himſelf into a conteſt with a gentleman ſo every way his ſuperior.

Now all this I intend ſhall happen, but the chance of firing firſt, which I certainly mean to take; and if the fickle goddeſs decides in my favour, Mr. Mars good bye to you.

Now, you wonder what all this ſpeechifying means!—Why, you dolt! do you not ſee that the calves heads, and ſheeps hearts of the jury, (if the affair goes that length) will be miſled; they will never conceive ſuch fine words could proceed from any but the nobleſt

motives, and will bring in their verdict —manſlaughter.

And do not you ſee, that being thus early with the printer will prevent a leſs advantageous ſtory? at leaſt, till mine has gone abroad, and I ſuppoſe you know the firſt account generally makes the ſtrongeſt impreſſion, ſo for once I think I ſhall have defeated the devil, and what delights me more, that upſtart Mackenzie. But I can ſtay no longer, for I would not have them wait for me, ſo adieu! I feel my ſpirits mount—a certain omen of ſucceſs. I ſhall write as ſoon as I am out of ſcent of the hounds; till then,

Adieu, adieu!

VERNON.

LETTER

LETTER LI.

MAJOR ST. AUBIN TO SIR HENRY DORSET.

I YESTERDAY witneſſed the laſt agonies of our late companion Lord Vernon. You ſhould earlier have been informed of his unhappy fate, but the ſad ſpectacle he exhibited, left ſuch an impreſſion on my mind, as rendered me incapable of doing what I conceive to be incumbent on me: this alone could tempt me to retrace the horrors of a day that muſt, whenever revived, fill my heart with terror, and oppreſs it with ſadneſs.

Dubois tells me his maſter was employed in writing to you till the moment of appointment; of courſe you are acquainted with what paſſed till that time, ſo I ſhall there commence my narrative.

He took me up in his way to the place fixed on for the meeting; he was apparently in great ſpirits. On the meeting of the parties, Lord Vernon addreſſed Mr. Mackenzie and myſelf, deſiring we would obſerve he had not ſought that meeting, having been compelled to it; that it was with reluctance he lifted his arm againſt his antagoniſt, whoſe youth and violence of temper he pitied; that he was ſtill willing, if a ſuitable apology were made, to overlook the almoſt unpardonable inſults he had received; but, if this propoſal was rejected, he called on us, whatever might

might be the iſſue, to do juſtice to the feelings of his heart. The motive which had induced him to fight, was the defence of his honour.

Mackenzie, in a ſarcaſtic manner, applauded his lordſhip's ſpeech, as it would, if he were the ſurvivor; be almoſt a certain acquittal in a court of law, and as certainly, ſhould he fall, prove the condemnation of his antagoniſt, who came to ſeek for a redreſs of injuries received; for moſt aſſuredly neither of thoſe preſent could deny he had ſpoken ſuch words.

Lord Vernon was about to reply, but the officer told him they had not come there to talk, and deſired him to take his ground. They toſſed up for the firſt fire, which fell to his lordſhip. I am ſorry to ſay, his exultation was evi-

dent; but, after taking the moſt deliberate aim, he miſſed his adverſary: his depreſſion was now equal to his former exultation—he was pale and trembling. The Officer, with the ſame coolneſs he had received, diſcharged his piſtol, but with different effect; Lord Vernon fell!

The ſurgeons, who were in waiting, now appeared, and declared they feared the wound was mortal. He was conveyed to his carriage, with intent to take him to his own houſe; but the ſurgeons ſaying it would be impoſſible for him to ſupport the motion ſo great a diſtance, Mackenzie deſired he might be taken to his uncle's, the Biſhop of ——, it being much nearer, which was accordingly done.

On

On reaching the houſe, we bore him into a parlour that was near the entrance, he having fainted from pain and loſs of blood, produced by the motion of the carriage. His late adverſary (for his enmity was now ſucceeded by the moſt affecting compaſſion) ſupported him on one ſide, (nor could he be perſuaded to ſeek his ſafety by flight, declaring he would meet the juſtice of his country, whatever might be the penalty affixed to his offence) I on the other.

On the door's being opened, I ſaw Lady Vernon ſitting penſively, leaning on her hand: the alteration in her perſon made it difficult for me to recollect her; yet, ſhe is beautiful as an angel. Her worn out form, in ſpite of debility and decay, is ſomething more than human; ſhe is the ſhadow of what ſhe

was; yet ſhe is the prototype of every thing that is lovely, and every thing that is affecting. She was unemployed, her look fixed on vacancy; notwithſtanding which ſhe was not diſturbed immediately. At length, the noiſe we made attracted her attention; ſhe aroſe and came towards us, but at the ſight of the pale, bloody ſpectacle which preſented itſelf, ſhe haſtily retreated; then keeping at a diſtance, ſhe looked wiſtfuly at us, while we placed the dying man on a ſofa.

Mackenzie, who had gone to acquaint the Biſhop with what had happened, now joined us; Lady Vernon beckoned him to her, and taking his hand, fearfully approached her lord. His crimſoned hand firſt caught her eye; ſhe piteouſly looked at it, and then directed a look of enquiry to her companion.

At

At this moment Lord Vernon revived, and ſlowly turning his head, his face met her view; ſhe ſhrieked, and, dropping the hand ſhe had taken, fled, hiding her face with her handkerchief. Mackenzie followed, and conducted her out of the room; her look was wild and aſtoniſhed. Meeting the Biſhop and her father as ſhe went out, ſhe made ſigns to them not to make a noiſe.

The ſurgeons had now probed the wound, and pronounced it mortal without a hope; they agreed, that to extract the ball, would be uſeleſs, as it would haſten his end, while it increaſed his torture; of this his uncle informed him. He rolled his eyes in anguiſh, and aſked if there was no hope?—His ſurgeons confirmed what the Biſhop had ſaid, and the poor man exclaimed,

in a voice of deſpair, "I will not, nor I cannot die!" His uncle urged his danger, and preſſed him to employ thē few moments that were his, in ſupplicatīng his offended Maker, but he did not ſeem to attend to him.

At this time that fool Danvers, who had followed us, and gained admittance, joined us; he approached his late companion in vice and folly, ſaying, in a jocund voice:

"Cheer up, Frank! cheer up my lad! Why the devil do you let theſe ſcreech owls whoop to you—pronouncing death and damnation? You will live theſe half hundred years yet, and play many a prank for them to ſermonize on! Tut, man, don't make ſuch faces! I tell you, you are worth a whole church yard of dead men! What

a ſtory

a ſtory will this make! Damn me if I don't have caricatures of it to ornament the room of the unbelievers; it will be fine amuſement for the whole club, to ſee their preſident ſtretched on a couch, turning up his eyes, and making wry faces, with a prieſt on each ſide of him, and his co-partner in ſin, the witty St. Aubin, ſniv'ling in the back ground, while I appear in the front of the canvas, diverting myſelf with the whole group! But cheer up, I ſay! what art afraid of? You wont die—and if you do, why there's an end! We are none of the after-reckoners—we believe in no Gods or Devils, do we Frank?"

The poor Vernon turned his eyes on me, and with a look and accent of diſguſt, ſaid, "Take him away."

The Biſhop inſtantly deſired he would quit his houſe, which he obeyed, ſinging as he went, "Hey to the midnight hark away."

Doctor Howard now ſeconded the Biſhop's entreaty that he would employ the preſent time in prayer; he petulantly anſwered:

"Sir, it would be uſeleſs; I feel I am dying, and had I my life to live over, it would not be ſufficient to atone for the crimes of any one year ſince I attained manhood."

The horror theſe words conveyed into the countenance of his Chriſtian counſellor is not to be deſcribed: he was ſilent for a moment, then taking the hand of the unhappy man, he, in a voice that would have ſoothed deſpair itſelf,

itſelf, ſpoke to him of hope, of the wondrous mercies of that Power before which he was about to appear. But he was interrupted by the unſoftened ſufferer's turning away his face, and ſaying, "I tell you it is too late!"

The holy man then knelt down, and fervently petitioned heaven for mercy on the poor creature who, conſcious of his great offences, and trembling at its decrees, dared not to ſeek it for himſelf.

Lord Vernon, after half an hour's ſilence, which wore more the appearance of ſullenneſs than want of power to ſpeak, expired, leaving all preſent deeply impreſſed by the awful, ſhocking ſcene they had witneſſed. Doctor Howard obſerving the late antagoniſt of

the

the departed much affected, addreſſed him:

"Young man, what means that look of ſorrow? It ill becomes a conqueror —a ſucceſsful murderer! Have you not gained your utmoſt wiſh? Look where your foe lies dead, with all his crimes upon him; no hour of atonement given him! Had he not fallen by your arm, he might have lived to repent of his errors, and died a Chriſtian; he might have borne teſtimony of the falſehoods with which he had ſtained your ſiſter's honour; they now die with him. Go to her and tell her you have redreſſed her wrongs, by robbing him of life who could alone have proved her innocence! Go hence, ſir; go to your companions, and give vent to the pride that ſwells your heart; boaſt of your exploit, and receive their com-

commendation, for you have well deſerved. Have you not bravely broken the laws of God, and ſet thoſe of your country at defiance? Yes, you have done more; you have hazarded a life of which you have no right to diſpoſe; a life that he who gave has alone a right to demand when the purpoſes for which it was given are fulfilled. Had this ill-fated man not fallen, you muſt; ſuch was your dire reſolve: therefore, hide not the triumph you feel—give full vent to the tranſports the joyful occaſion inſpires."

The young ſoldier almoſt ſinking under his rebuke, replied:

"Ill, ſir, have you judged of the paſſions that now actuate this boſom: pride or triumph dwells not there! Remorſe and anguiſh have driven them thence,

thence, and the recollection of this day, will embitter the remainder of my life. A few hours paſt I conſidered myſelf as doing an acceptable ſervice, by endeavouring to rid the world of a man who I thought not fit to live; I am now convinced he was not fit to die, and I repent, too late, an error which has ariſen from habit and education.

"Intended from my infancy for the profeſſion of arms, I was taught in a military ſchool to prefer honour to life: the occupation ſtill more forcibly implanted the idea, and I conceived myſelf moſt a man at the moment I was diveſted of humanity; but the miſt is withdrawn, and ſhould any other action of my life embrue my hands in the blood of a fellow creature, I will ſtrip it of the ſpecious garb in which this was dreſſed, and inſtead of the terms

Courage

Courage and Honour, I will give it its proper title, Cowardice or Revenge."

Then, turning to the Biſhop, he ſaid:

"My lord, to you, as the relative of that unfortunate nobleman, I yield myſelf a priſoner."

The Biſhop replied, that from him he had nothing to dread, as his efforts ſhould be to excite, not to repreſs, the mercy of his country. I took this opportunity to aſſure him, I felt myſelf too much intereſted in his acquittal, to be other than his friend.

I now took my leave, returned home, and ſhut myſelf in my apartment, where I have ſpent my time in reviewing my paſt life; or, as the poet more juſtly

juſtly expreſſes it, "I have turned my eyes inward on myſelf," where I have found little to approve, but much to condemn: yet, the retroſpect has not diſheartened me—it has made me a new man—it has filled me with contempt of my former ſelf, and I never more can be the worthleſs, deſpicable thing I was.

With wiſhes for your Happineſs,

I remain your Friend,

CHARLES ST. AUBIN.

LETTER

LETTER LII.

LADY BRIDGET C—— TO LADY ANN FITZROY.

BEING on the point of leaving England, I have taken up my pen to bid you adieu;—a long adieu! Perhaps it is the laſt time I may ever addreſs you in this country; yet

"Haply, when age has ſilver'd o'er my hair,
Malice may learn to ſcorn ſo mean a ſpoil;
Envy may ſlight a face no longer fair,
And pity welcome to my native ſoil."

Should this be the caſe, or ſhould the preſent unrelenting deſtroyers of my fame find any object more worthy of their

their purſuit, I ſhall take advantage of that loſt creature's misfortunes, and fly to preſs the friend and ſoil I love. I am ſenſible in quitting them, I reſign the only happineſs my evil fate had left me; I likewiſe feel I am completing the triumph of my enemies, for ſuch I have, though how I have acquired them I am utterly ignorant; at leaſt I am confident, that in my life I never did any human being an ill office, or ever intentionally inſulted, affronted, or mortified even the unworthy. I have not deviated from the paths of honour, yet am I driven from my friend, my country, and my huſband, by the tongue of ſlander.

Being ſeparated from the laſt of theſe, I will confeſs to my Ann, in ſome degree atones the ſacrifice of the former; for, can the wretch whoſe heart is filled with

with Leſley, whoſe thoughts leave room for nothing but his perfections and misfortunes; how can ſuch a wretch ſupport the preſence of a man, who has a right to the affection ſhe has given to another? No, I cannot; I feel I am unworthy his protection, and nothing but withdrawing from it can reconcile me to myſelf. Theſe feelings are not new to me—they have been my companions ſince my fatal attachment to that ill-fated young man.

The miſery and meanneſs of my ſituation became daily more inſupportable, as my heart, at the moment it told me Lord C—— was entitled to my kindeſt attention, compelled me to with-hold it, from the idea that I might impoſe on his judgment, and that he would miſtake the performance of a duty, as a proof of affection.

Thus

Thus have I gone on at variance with myſelf, ſhrinking from the preſence of a man whoſe ſociety it was impoſſible for me to avoid without declaring the cauſe of my ſorrows, which I had often determined to do, but my courage as often forſook me, and I had relinquiſhed the hope of doing the only thing that could reſtore me to my own good opinion, or alleviate the wretchedneſs with which I was bowed down. But the world has done that for me which I never could have performed for myſelf; it has ſeparated my lord and me for ever.

Ah! how would its malice be baffled, could it know it had reſtored me to all the tranquillity I am capable of enjoying; yes, perhaps, it would not grudge me this little acquiſition of inward treaſure! Perhaps it will be ſatisfied with having

having robbed me of my good name, of honour, and of a ſplendid ſituation; with having ſent me an exile from my native country, to a land of ſtrangers, unknowing and unknown! Yes, I will have charity enough to believe that even envy itſelf would be ſatisfied with the victory it has obtained, nor ſeek to obtrude on the happineſs of a heart whoſe poſſeſſor is hid in obſcurity.

You will not accuſe me of vanity, (for indeed every ſpark, if I ever had any, is extinguiſhed within me) when I ſay, had I been a fool, Lord C—— would not now have to bluſh for the follies of his wife. The contempt of the one ſex would have ſaved her from the hatred and ill offices of the other; ridiculed by the male, ſhe would have nothing to fear from the female; the weakneſs of her head would have ſuffi-

ciently

ciently atoned, had her heart been ever ſo vicious. Where no ſuperiority was given, no degradation would be neceſſary.

Think not, my dear Ann, I am giving vent to ſpleen againſt thoſe who have calumniated me; I am only communicating the unvaried obſervations I have hitherto made on the ungenerous diſpoſitions of the cenſorious part of my own ſex, of which there are ſo vaſt a number as to render the whole ſuſpected, and likewiſe diſreſpected. But enough of this, leſt in endeavouring to reform them, I unintentionally become one of their number.

You will wonder at not having ſooner been informed of my intended departure, particularly when I tell you that when you read this, I ſhall, in all proba-

probability, be in another kingdom; yet, I have communicated it to you nearly as ſoon as I knew it myſelf.

I was this morning ſitting in my dreſſing room, indulging myſelf in contemplating the well-painted miniature of the loſt Leſley: it had awakened all my feelings; the ſorrows of my bleeding boſom ſought vent in words; I lamented his cruel deſtiny! I complained of my own hard fate! till, worn with anguiſh, I gazed in ſilence on the all that remained of the man my ſoul approved. From this ſituation I was rouſed by the falling of a tear upon my hand; at the ſame moment a deep-drawn ſigh reached my ear; ſurpriſed, I turned my head, when, to my inconceivable confuſion, I ſaw Lord C—— leaning on my chair, with his face drowned in tears!

I haſtily aroſe, and would have concealed the picture, but he prevented me by taking it from me. My agitation was exceſſive; he gently took my hand, and leading me to my ſeat, he placed himſelf by me. I felt like a guilty wretch, waiting his dread condemnation; I dared not to look up, or ſpeak. He too was ſilent—this increaſed my perturbation—my whole frame ſhook, and I ſhould have fainted, had he not broken the awful ſilence by entreating me to be compoſed, and aſſuring me, in a voice which confirmed his word, that I had nothing to fear: that compaſſion for my ſufferings obliterated every other idea.

Encouraged by this, I ventured to offer an apology for the ſcene he had witneſſed. Seeing he liſtened attentively, I confeſſed every feeling of my heart

heart reſpecting Leſley; and took this opportunity of doing juſtice to his character, and removing any ſuſpicions which might have been entertained of his integrity in his conduct to me.

I then talked of myſelf, and gave Lord C—— the aſſurances I thought due to him and myſelf, of his honour being unſullied.

Here he interrupted me, ſaying:

" I implicitly believe every ſyllable you have uttered; I am convinced Leſley was honourable, and you are ſpotleſs. I would to heaven no other opinion were neceſſary to our repoſe; but the world, Lady C——, the world is againſt us; it holds you forth as a ſhameleſs woman, and me as a credulous fool. Your affection for the youth

we lament was long ſuſpected; your ſolitude during his confinement, and ſorrow ſince his death, have confirmed thoſe ſuſpicions, and given malice all the power it ſought. You are the ſcoff of your enemies, and your friends are in doubt! I alone am convinced of your innocence."

Impreſſed with gratitude for his generous treatment, I replied, I wiſhed no more; he ſhould henceforth be the world to me. He heſitated; at length proceeding, ſaid, he wiſhed his friends could be ſatisfied, but that was impoſſible; time might do much, though appearances were at preſent againſt it; ſo much ſo, that he ſaw no way of reconciling his friends to him but by parting with ———

Here

Here he pauſed in the utmoſt embarraſſment, when I, with ſome emotion, aſked?

"With me, my lord!"

After a ſhort ſtruggle, he replied:

"Yes, Lady C——, my obdurate friends inſiſt upon it, and have declined all connection with me whilſt I afford you my protection: of this I have made ſeveral attempts to inform you, but my reſolution, till this moment, has not been equal to the taſk. The ſorrows in which I have ſeen you involved, filled my boſom with compaſſion, whilſt it convinced me I was an exile from your affections; and I dreaded adding to ſufferings which I ſaw, with anguiſh, were ſinking you to the grave.

"But, ſince the hour of explanation is arrived, I will not conceal from you, that I have pledged my honour to my father to ſeparate from you, and make it public that I have done ſo. The pledge is a ſacred one, and I muſt redeem it, though my conſcience tells me the means I uſe are unjuſt, ungenerous, and tyrannical to you, as well as deſtructive to my own peace. I am aſhamed of the promiſe I have made, but have not reſolution to retreat from the performance of it. I muſt therefore—"

Here I interrupted him by ſaying:

"Hold, my lord! You need no further urge me; your commands ſhall be obeyed; my preſence ſhall no longer divide you from your relations: this ſhall be the laſt time we will meet!"

He

He ſaid ſomething of a ſhort ſeparation, but I prevented his proceeding, by aſſuring him, we never more would meet or hold converſe on this ſide the grave: that the ſteps he took to heal the wounds of his own honour, muſt feſter thoſe in mine: that the world he ſo much dreaded, would be juſtified in ridiculing the weakneſs of a man, who, after having joined with it, in atteſting the infamy of his wife, reſtored to her the protection he dared not to afford at the time he thought her innocent.

He ſaid, he hoped my ſentiments would ſoon alter, till which time I ſhould find by that paper (putting a ſealed one into my hand) he had not been unmindful of the rank I had to ſupport as Lady C——, and his wife.

I inſtantly

I inſtantly reſtored the paper, telling him, as I meant to reſign both theſe ill-fated diſtinctions, I ſhould have no occaſion for his bounty, my own ſmall fortune being ſufficient to procure the comforts of life in the humble ſtyle I ſhould require them: that it would ill ſuit a diſcarded wife, whoſe fame was branded with infamy, to aſſume a conſequence from the name, or accept of ſplendor from the man who had, by driving her from his protection, proclaimed her unworthy of either.

I now took what I hope will be a laſt farewell of him: I told him, and with truth, I wiſhed his happineſs; for though I thought his diſmiſſion (declaring me, as he believed, innocent of even intentional guilt) unjuſt, as well as unkind, I from my ſoul forgive him

him; and I never ſhall addreſs the throne of grace without putting his welfare in my petition. May he long be happy, for he is worthy! An indolence in his temper is the only defect in his nature, and this has been ſtrengthened by habit. Brought up under an auſtere, ſevere father, who ſaw, with a jealous eye, the ſuperior talents of his ſon, and fearing they would ſtand between him and the idol of his heart, (Royal favour), took every method poſſible to nip the bud of genius, by keeping his mind and body in a ſtate of inactivity till both were become equally conſtitutional, and till he had forgot to act for himſelf.

Thus has he continued in a ſtate of ſubordination to the tyrant who indeed gave him life, but robbed that life of its deareſt enjoyment.

But

But to return: Lord C—— appeared ſhocked at the ſuddenneſs with which I was about to fulfil his wiſhes; he attempted to ſpeak, but finding his voice fail him, he caught my hand to detain me, but I forcibly withdrew it, and, hurrying from him, I ſhut myſelf in my apartment, where I gave vent to the emotions which ſwelled my burſting boſom. Thus relieved, reaſon came to my aid, and I wondered I had been ſo diſturbed at ſeeing the wiſh of my ſoul on the point of being fulfilled.

I then gave directions for my earlieſt poſſible removal, and have employed the interval in informing you of the circumſtances which led to it. I have now come to the only painful part, that of bidding adieu to my friend. I ſhall conſtantly inform you of my ſituation; let not the change in it afflict you!

I feel

I feel a preſentiment that I ſhall be happier than the ten laſt years have ſeen me; thoſe miſspent years in which I was the object of envy, and ſuppoſed to be gratifying every wiſh of my volatile heart, though at the time I very ſeldom knew what its wiſhes were, fearing to conſult with it, leſt I ſhould find its actions and inclinations were at variance.

But I muſt conclude; I muſt bid adieu to my Ann! 'Tis a hard word! it wounds my boſom!—I did not think it would have been ſo difficult. Farewell!—'tis paſt! All elſe is eaſy!

Lord C——, farewell! England, too, farewell!

BRIDGET C——.

FINIS.

T. Plummer, Printer, Seething-Lane, Tower-Street.